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THINGS SEEN IN MOROCCO

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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"It is hardly too much to say that Mr Dawson's latest story does for the Moors what Morier's *Hajji Baba* did for the Persians. At anyrate we find here what few books in the world, and certainly no other work of fiction in English, can boast of—a deep and accurate knowledge of Moorish life, manners, and ways of thinking. . . . Such intimate knowledge is rarely combined with the skill to impart and the imagination to vivify it. Mr Dawson has both. . . . Indeed the Oriental atmosphere is rendered so admirably that future translators of the *Arabian Nights* could scarcely choose a better model."

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AFRICAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT

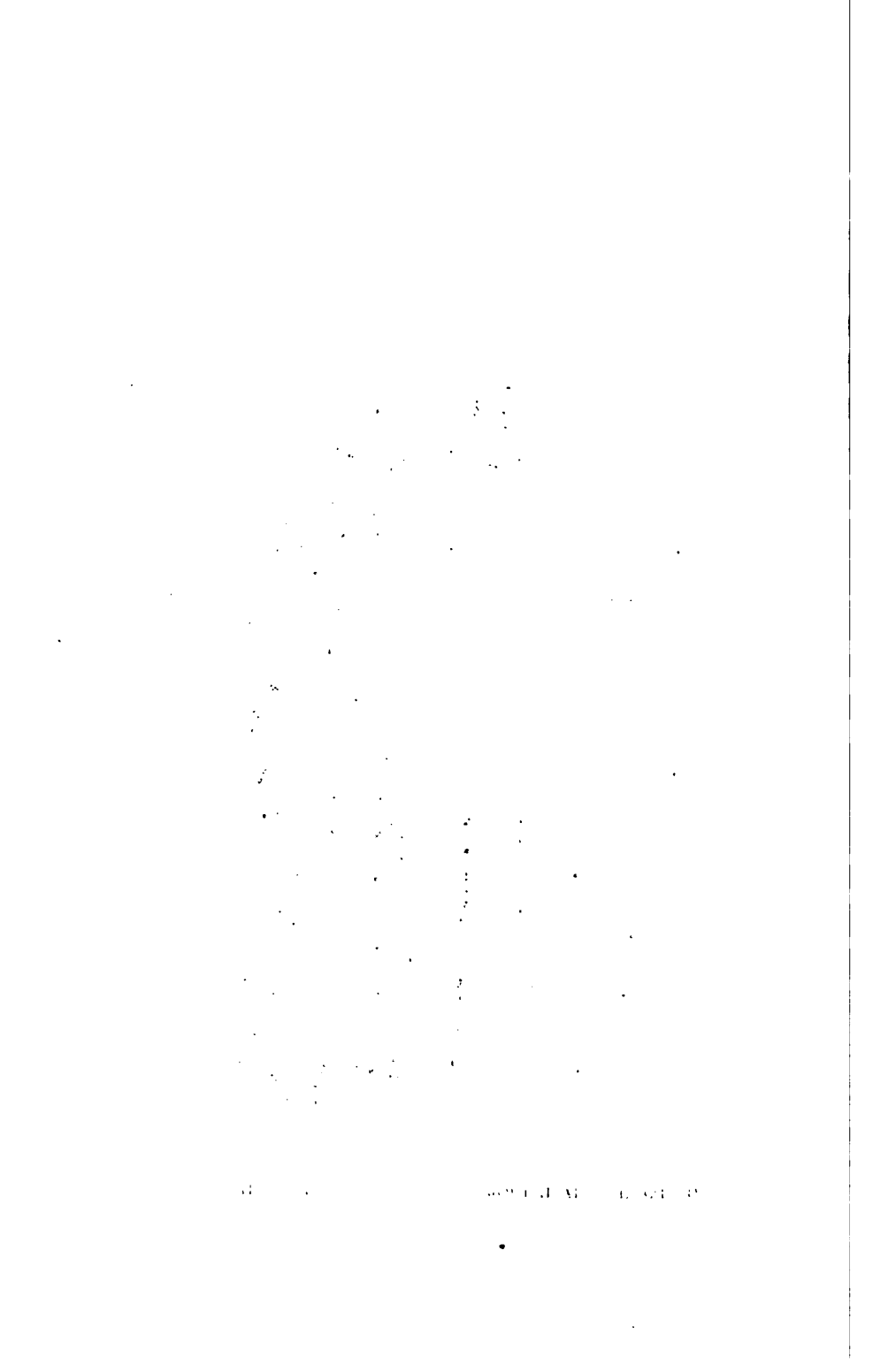
BISMILLAH

THE STORY OF RONALD KESTREL

IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN

GOD'S FOUNDLING

THE SULTAN OF MOROCCO: MOULAI ABD EL AZIZ IV



THINGS SEEN IN MOROCCO

BEING A BUNDLE OF JOTTINGS, NOTES, IMPRESSIONS, TALES, AND TRIBUTES

BY

A. J. DAWSON

WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
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LONDON
1904

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TO

SIR ARTHUR NICOLSON, BART.

K.C.B., K.C.I.E., C.M.G.,

HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S ENVOY-EXTRAORDINARY
AND MINISTER-PLENIPOTENTIARY IN MOROCCO,

THESE NOTES AND SKETCHES FROM
MOROCCO ARE DEDICATED, WITH
ASSURANCES OF THE AUTHOR'S
SINCERE APPRECIATION, GRATITUDE
AND RESPECT

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B'ISM ILLAH!

ONE has read of an age of exquisites; it is not the age we live in. Ours is the day of the specialist. Less pleasing, you say? And that is quite possible. More widely informed, however, one may suppose, if not more really understanding. One thing your exquisites and specialists seem to have in common. It is a good thing, but, like every other flower in the garden of our life, it is not without its own peculiar thorns. They are all for form and detail, these tremendously able fellows, and, peering so far beneath the surface in their own especial claims, they are apt to miss the general contour of hill and valley round and about them. The painting is a big affair, but, by your leave, the picture is a bigger. "Workmanship, give us perfect workmanship on perfectly prepared backgrounds, and — hang the *ensemble!*" Your specialist is rather apt to get like that. Which is really a pity, for, as we ignorant outsiders would point out, the finished presentment is, after all, the end and aim of even the most perfect craftsmanship. The experts forget that, and are given to sniffing if reminded by the contemplative Philistine. One of the results is that many authors can take no pleasure in the printed page, few painters can be happy in a picture-gallery, and the majority of musicians avoid concerts as they would the plague or a barrel-organ.

Scientific exactitude is a fine thing, in science. But depend on it, Mr Gradgrind missed the choicest flavours, the richest morsels in life's feast.

Moghreb al-Acksa, the country we call Morocco, is a land of phantasy which has eluded the all-apportioning specialist as successfully as it has evaded the outstretched, forthright hand of European civilisation, the coaxing digits of Exeter Hall, the solemn, record-gleaning studies of tape and camera-armed would-be historians, and the levelling, empire-building tactics of Christian statesmen.

The Richard Burtons of this life are not numerous; they scarcely belong to an age of specialists. Mr Cunninghame Graham deserves well of his readers, by token that he has been too wise to attempt scientific exploitation, or historical portrayal, of Sunset Land, and too keen of vision to miss its essential beauty. Another modern writer has made the attempt, and England is in his debt for a prodigious, a really wonderful budget of very useful facts and figures in connection with the Land of the Moors. But for flesh and blood pictures thereof—eheu! As well might one delve in Buckle's *Civilization* for the spirit and essence of the Arthurian legends.

To be sure, the much-besmirched artist temperament is, one must suppose, an essential qualification for the right presentation of pictures, in prose or poetry, music or painting, and lacking it no armament of knowledge, however elaborate, will serve. But even granted the requisite gift of artistry, there is danger in the specialising tendency and a certain barrenness which comes with the prolonged pursuit of exactitude and laboriously-finished completeness. Compare Browning's *Englishman in Italy* with his

Italian in England. Both are good, but when compared, how generously vivid and instantly pictorial is the first, and how palely inadequate the second! Certain kinds of knowledge do positively hamper artistic intuition, and for a mental view of some beautiful foreign place which I desired to possess and carry in my heart to look at during foggy afternoons in London—a picture, in fine—I would go, from choice, to a man of art fresh from spending his first week in that particular spot. For commercial intelligence there are the consular reports. Bædeker and Whittaker, each in his walk, is admirably useful. For historical records and exact information turn we to the historians, and, if possible, to those among them who lived in the place of which they wrote. For my picture, my live, warm picture, give me a quiet half-hour with that man of art (painter and writer both, if I am to be given perfection) whose mind still tingles and glows from the vividness of its first fleeting impact with its subject. When he has spent years in the land, and become an authority, he is above noticing the tints I want preserved; he knows too much of the internal complexities to condescend to the drawing of the very outlines my mind's eye demands. And if the foreign place be any such weird, elusive and mysterious land as Morocco, then I know he will present me with an admirable sketch of its rugged body corporate, and leave me entirely lacking where its strange spirit and essence, the cloudy fascination that is Morocco, is concerned.

Oh, those first impressions, their heart-throbbing intensity, their wet-eyed distinctness; never to be forgotten, rarely recorded, yet more rarely actually conveyed to others! It is grievous that man, bustling

on in the vulgar race for facts—classified bones—should brush aside, lose and ignore the living beauty of these early visions which, in the dazzling actuality of their colouring, the outstanding vividness of their lines, partake of the supernatural, of something pertaining to a Fourth Dimension.

But there are commonplace books, you say. Yes. But do those who fill them see visions? Or are the impressions, thus neatly stored and laid away, for the most part like their pigeon-hole, commonplace? B'ísm Illah!

And I who write these lines am forced to admit here that I have read some books which purported to deal with Morocco and were written soon enough in all conscience after the author's first glimpses of the country, from hotel windows and the like. And they were wildly bad, those books, madly, stupidly and everything else short of humorously bad, for the reason that they conveyed nothing; certainly not atmosphere, assuredly not facts. I hold no brief for ignorance, God wot (unless it be my own), but I will say that it was not alone the writers' ignorance of their subject that made these books worthless; it was not that they had not seen enough of Morocco; it was that they had seen nothing, and never would, lacking, it seemed, the vision that shows men life with sufficient vividness to enable them to convey the same upon the written page. There was another book—the most vivid it may be that ever had Morocco for its subject—a book that truly gave one the hot, mysterious atmosphere of the country, and that book did but tell the story of a failure, of an unsuccessfully-attempted journey of not the slightest importance. In the letter it was

sufficiently inaccurate in places, for its writer was no old traveller or established authority on Morocco; but as I live that book contained more of the essential spirit of Sunset Land than do the score of standard tomes on the subject which face me as I write. It was called, as Moors call the country, *Moghreb al-Acksa*.

Sensible traders, however, do not decry their own wares, but rather extol these, belittling only the oddments which they are unable to stock. First impressions are as flashingly elusive as summer lightning. Men and women of to-day are mostly sensible traders.

"Rafael made a century of sonnets.

. . . . . .

You and I would rather read that volume
(Taken to his beating bosom by it),
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper 'Beatrice.'

. . .

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not? than read a fresh *Inferno*."

. . . . . .

Asked to give a name to that characteristic of Morocco which most clearly distinguishes it from other semi-savage lands, a well-known traveller, quite fairly, if uninformingly, replied, "Its distinctiveness." Its inherent impressionistic force does distinguish the Land of the Afternoon. Its power of vividly and instantly impressing its image upon a receptive and understanding mind is very remarkable. The Eastern traveller would be apt to curl his travelled lip if he heard a man speak of the Eastern picturesque-

ness of Morocco. He would be wrong. There again, a man would have been misled by the too eager pursuit of special knowledge. There is as much of the storied East in Morocco of to-day as you shall find in the whole of British India. There is more, far more, that is essentially Oriental about country life and travel in the foot-hills of the Atlas than the inquiring globe-trotter will ever discover between Point de Galle and Kandahar.

That is it. In Morocco there is very much of the essential, the undisturbed fibre, the uninfluenced spirit of place and of people. It is Moghreb al-Acksa, the extreme north-west; it is nearer to Pall Mall than is any other point in the Orient. And it is farther, ay, immeasurably farther, in every other sense of the word than the geographical specialist's, as any man who knows both India and Pall Mall may be made to feel by journeying due south from his hotel in Gibraltar for, say, one week.

And this distinguishing feature of Morocco, whilst sufficiently remarkable, is not so surprising as at first blush it may appear.

A thousand years before Christ, Hanno graved upon a stone, in the temple of Saturn at Carthage, some account of his adventure to the beyond-land, past the Pillars of Hercules, with sixty galleys of fifty oars each. The records of the twentieth century after Christ contain no suggestion that any change has crept over the province of Sus or the manner of those that dwell therein since Hanno's venturesome outsetting. A thousand years after Hanno's voyage Procopius Cæsarea wrote that two white pillars of stone stood beside a spring near Tangier, and that upon them he read inscribed, in Phœnician script,

these words: "We have fled before the face of Joshua the robber, son of Nun." Within twenty years of Annus Hegirae the Arabs, pouring through the Nile delta like ants, had reached the extreme north-west. There they were held awhile in check by the original occupants, the present people of the hills, who then were bitterly and savagely resenting the proximity of Roman influence, as the other day they were resenting the intrusion of Major Spillbury of the Globe Venture Syndicate. But the Arabs brought craft to bear upon the hardy, irreconcilable Berbers. It was not, "We desire your lands for ourselves," but rather, "Permit us to assist you in removing the accursed infidel from your neighbourhood!"

Directed by Arab skill, Berber strength did snap the Roman yoke; only to discover, within a score of years, that the existence of the Berbers as an independent nation was gone for ever. As a nation. But to this day they have preserved themselves, their mountain homes, their language, their hardy customs and savage methods, absolutely and entirely intact, as any Christian (who rates his life lightly) may discover for himself by stepping across their frontiers —say a fortnight's journey from London.

For thirteen hundred years, then, the descendants of Mohammed's followers, ruled always (nominally if not actually) by Shareefs, whose sway over their subjects has rested solely upon their assumed descent from members of the Prophet's family, have occupied Morocco, or Mauretania, as its Roman invaders named it. Its history has been a chequered one, blood-stained for the most part, barbarous always, according to Christian standards, and distinguished by an

invincible conservatism. By force of Berber endurance and Arab craft and daring, the Moors conquered and occupied Spain, and terrorised Europe right down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, at which late day tributes reached Moorish coffers each year from all the principal European centres, by way of bribes to ensure against piracy and the capture and enslavement of European travellers and sailors. During the past century the decadence of the Moorish nation and people has been undeviating and all-embracing. And now the day of Morocco's final disintegration is undoubtedly at hand; she has truly earned her pathetic name of Sunset Land. Across her south-eastern boundary the perfectly-equipped armies of a great European power lie waiting (occasionally urging) the fall of the over-ripe fruit. Germany has made every preparation to reap commercial benefit by this last act of an Empire. Britain, once the holder of the most valuable strategic vantage point in Morocco, if not in the whole of North Africa, exhibits all the signs of truly British aloofness, or indifference; whilst it must be admitted her hands are very fully occupied in other parts of Africa and elsewhere. The end is near. It may be next year, or it may be next decade; but the end is near, and the Sick Man of Africa will never rise from the couch of his decline.

So much for the political maze, the seductive quagmire of prophecy. Remains the fact that, up to the present, the realm of which Abd el Aziz IV., by Allah's mercy, is the ceremonial head, the infinitely bewildered sovereign, continues the only independent and unexploited state in the whole of Northern Africa. Curiously, it is also the only portion of the

continent that is within range of the naked eye from Europe, and practically within modern big gun range. Traces of its influence are writ large over southern Europe. Itself remains most singularly impervious to any sort of outside influence. Its life to-day, within a few hours' journey of British Gibraltar, with its parochialism and its twentieth-century scientific appliances, is an exact replica of the life of which one reads in Genesis. Historians aver that the Berbers are the descendants of those who gave place to the children of Israel in Canaan. Granting this, and that Scripture presents a faithful picture of the lives and customs of those Canaanites, it is not less than marvellous that one should be able to see that picture, unchanged and in the living, within a few miles of Europe, and in the twentieth century.

It is this marvel, principally, and kindred features of Morocco's sphinx-like face, which give it its distinction among Oriental countries; its wonderful impressiveness, its instant power to burn an indelible picture into the mind of an open-eyed traveller, subtly, with a force and power of fascination which may not be denied.

"Quite vulgar souls are made to feel it," said a Morocco traveller to the present writer last year. "It bewilders them. They don't understand, of course, but—m'sha Allah! they come back to it as certain sure as dates have stones. Did you hear of the beginning of things here with Phillip Frobisher, the Manchester man? Not that he was a vulgar soul. But his soul had mostly lived in a rather vulgar sort of body."

I had not heard, so I said nothing, but listened, for my informant was a man to be listened to where Al

Moghreb is concerned. No rule of record "authority" he, but a man who has sought the strange, savage spirit of the land, and wooed Morocco in her most hidden places. So, too, I give the story here for what it is worth, by way of illustration, and without any pretence at apology. What can't be endured must be skipped, say the cynical specialists of criticism.

"WITHIN A FEW HOURS' JOURNEY OF GIBRALTAR"—TANGIER, FROM THE BAY

PHILLIP FROBISHER'S IMPRESSION

AT the time of the story Phillip Frobisher had just ceased to be "young Mr Phillip," or "Phillip Frobisher, Junior," and had attained the solid dignity of "Mr. Phillip Frobisher of Messrs Frobisher Bros.," the well-known Manchester spinning firm. His Spanish-born mother, a landscape painter whose work had brought her credit in Paris and London, he had lost during childhood. The grave, shrewd, self-contained father, whose recent death had made of Phillip a full partner in the business, had systematically and consistently schooled his only son in the traditions of the "house." Phillip Frobisher had been brought up not so much as an independent human entity as a future partner in Frobisher Bros. The other two members of the firm were slightly reduced reproductions, rather paler in tone than the original, of Phillip's father.

Phillip was a tall, personable fellow, grave like his father, rather less shrewd and more sanguine, darker of skin, and more smooth and fleshy in outline, but otherwise the same solid, steady-gaited, level-headed sort of person. Any display of emotion had been impossible in the presence of the father. Phillip had grown up without inclination toward this or any other sort of display. The traditions of the house did not demand such things. They demanded calm, grave, courteous concentration during business hours,

and sober, decent restfulness, with study of the *Economist*, at other seasons. Lunching or dining with a member of the firm was not an undertaking to enter upon carelessly, or with a mind frivolously unprepared. You might be sure of excellent food and sound wines; but the whole thing was rather suggestive of a Cabinet Council or a whist-party of early Victorian days. And now, at twenty-eight, prosperous Phillip Frobisher had no conception of any less solid, four-square attitude in life than this.

The death of his father, after three weeks of uneventful illness, rather disturbed the young man. It was an out-of-the-ordinary sort of happening to which routine arrangements did not apply. Phillip found concentration of his thoughts at the office a matter less simple and natural than usual. He even dreamed of a night more than once, and each time of the dark-faced, alert-looking mother, whose portrait, showing her at work before an easel, faced his father's in the vandyke-brown dining-room of their substantial Manchester home.

"The boy had better take a change," said Thomas to Samuel Frobisher, as one might recommend a dose of Gregory's powder for a child. "Why not let him arrange this transfer of agents in Morocco for us? A fortnight in Tangier and a fortnight's travelling would set him up."

So it was decided, with grave thought for the young man's physical welfare and an eye to the firm's interests. And as to Kismet (Destiny, Fate, or what do you call it?), Frobisher Brothers were far too business-like to waste consideration upon such intangibilities. And so Phillip Frobisher, wearing the tall hat and frock coat of his daily life, started

from Liverpool aboard a Papayanni boat bound for Tangier, and his Uncle Samuel, much preoccupied with a sleek note-book and final instructions, was there to bid his nephew *bon voyage*.

Now, as Kismet, or what you may call it, decided, the Papayanni boat called at Cadiz on her way out, and, in order that engineers might doctor some small flaw in her machinery, remained there for three days. Phillip Frobisher left her side in a boat manned by swarthy, swearing, laughing rascals, natives of the port, and proceeded, clad in sober morning coat and bowler hat, to present a letter of recommendation to a distant connection of his own on his mother's side of the family. It was intended that he should have made a week-end trip from Tangier for this purpose, but the gods who direct the affairs of Manchester business gentlemen, advised possibly by those of the scented South, disposed matters otherwise. The Southern gods are incorrigibly romantic and dramatic—theatrical if you will. Their climate justifies, nay, demands, a certain measure of what Northerners might call gaudiness. Phillip landed then at one of the wickedest ports in Spain.

The Custom-house officials annoyed the Manchester man a good deal. Their attitude toward porters and passengers struck him as undignified, unbusiness-like, almost indecent. From shrill vituperation and pictorial blasphemy to exaggerated bows, suave phrases and hat raising — and back again—within a few minutes; this sort of thing embarrassed Mr Frobisher, and left him uncertain as to whether mutely raising two stiff fingers to the brim of one's bowler hat were not too effusive a response to the bare-headed, hand-upon-heart, low bow of

an ornately gilded, white-gloved superintendent. "They are wanting in method and in sense of proportion," he thought, as he named his destination, with laborious incorrectness, to a be-sashed and be-scarred pirate, who drove a typical bull-ring nag in a carriage which apparently was held together by fragments of palmetto cord and sardine boxes.

The Englishman's Spanish relative was not in Cadiz, but that worthy's twenty-year-old son was; as dapper and world-worn a personification of latter-day Spanish decadence as a man might wish to see. Juan Guiterrez was the young man's name, his manners were delightful, his English fair, and his inmost feeling toward Phillip Frobisher that of an elderly and *blase* satyr good-humouredly bent upon hospitality toward some innocent lout of a school-boy. His own idea of his attitude was that it was that of an accomplished man of the world, a gallant, bound by courtesy to the initiation and entertainment of a singularly *gauche* and woolly Bœotian. Frobisher's view of Guiterrez, on the other hand, was that the young gentleman was a graceful and plausible youth, well-intentioned but unnecessarily deferential, and too showily attired. From standpoints so antithetical to our own do others see us. As a fact, Juan was not at all a bad fellow as young men go. But his workaday code of morality, had he given it words, would have rendered any respectable Briton speechless from excess of horror, by reason that it was a little less restrained than the code the Briton keeps for actual use, and a violent outrage upon that which we preserve as an ornament and for the judging of our neighbours.

But, judged by any standards you choose, Cadiz

is rather a wicked city, and not over-picturesque, when you compare it with other Spanish towns of similar importance. That, however, was the very thing that our Manchester man could not manage. He could not compare, and so his picture lacked perspective.

After dinner, Guiterrez steered his guest among the *cafés*, places of casual entertainment, in which the very air was heady and redolent of the full-bodied wines of Andalusia and of picadura smoke, and alive with sibilant sounds of gossip in a musical tongue. They supped gaily, though frugally, in one among a score of brightly-painted cubicles, at a vault-like restaurant, walled in by generous barrels of wine. And, after the meal, a word from world-worn Guiterrez brought a nut-coloured lady of the establishment, who for the delectation of the pair danced three separate measures upon the little table at which they sat. Frobisher maintained his gravity and his reserve until the lady flung him her over-scented handkerchief, with an ogle pronounced enough to have moved mountains. Then he lost both, remembered the traditions of the Manchester house, and insisted upon a swift, undignified adjournment. Guiterrez shrugged his graceful shoulders, that in the señorita's eyes he might be disassociated from his crude companion, and shortly afterwards they parted for the night.

Despite much bewilderment and a good deal of such small embarrassment as that described, Phillip Frobisher was enjoying himself, unaccountably. The last word represents his own view of his enjoyment. A daylight visit, picnic fashion, to a viñedo upon the Jerez road, that was owned by a member

of the Guiterrez family, was endured by Juan somewhat more gracefully than a 'Varsity undergraduate might suffer a Methodist tea-meeting, and was unreservedly enjoyed by Frobisher. Withal it was by way of being a revelation to him—a revelation which did not jar.

It may be that his three days in Spain planted no new growth in the mind of Phillip Frobisher. It is a fact that the experience, as it were, ploughed and harrowed the fallow mind of the Manchester man, leaving it porous, and open to the seed of impressionism as it had never been before. It did not furnish him with new desires and a fresh outlook upon life, but it stirred into sentient being all kinds of rudimentary unsuspected attributes of his nature, and stretched and loosened into pliancy the trim and rigid loopholes of his schooled vision. He heard his dead artist mother lovingly spoken of by these her warm-blooded compatriots. Somewhere in the red centre of his calmly pulsing veins the blood of the mother that bore him may have stirred faintly. He was an open-eyed, almost impressionable, man of business who landed in Tangier a few days later from the Papayanni boat.

But in Tangier business awaited the man from Manchester, and, his traditions rallying about him, he concentrated his mind exclusively upon that business until it was finished. A holiday task it was the partners had chosen for him, and thirty-six hours after landing Phillip Frobisher signed the necessary papers, made the necessary terse, grave report for Manchester, posted it, and turned about to open his new-ploughed mind to Tangier—to Morocco he would have said, unaware as yet that Christian-

ridden, infidel-polluted Tangier, biblically Eastern as is its every aspect, is yet one of the few spots in Sunset Land which to the end of the chapter must remain anathema to every true Moor.

Exactly what curious process then set to work in the mind and heart of Phillip Frobisher must needs remain a secret between the man and whatever god or gods became his. Possibly the said god or gods alone know. The rest of us can no more than follow the outward and visible signs, drawing therefrom whatsoever conclusions our particular gods may incline us to. I am going to tell you simply what Phillip Frobisher told my friend, upon a certain moonlight night, sitting beside a tent's mouth near a village called El Mousa, in the Gharb, just seven months after he landed in Morocco. He was squatting on a mattress at the time. His beard was six inches long, his head shaven, his skin tanned to a rich saddle-brown, and his dress, to the very drawers, kaftan, yellow riding-boots, and white Wazanni djellab, that of a Moor of the richer sort. Upon his right lounged Yusef Seydic, the Syrian who lived with him, at first as interpreter, and then as his instructor in Arabic. On his left was Hamadi ben Ibn, the Ribati Moor, who, with his smattering of English and Spanish, had accompanied the Manchester man upon his first journey in Morocco. Near by the mules and horses were tethered, contentedly munching their barley. Upon a great brass tray between them a German-silver teapot sprouted green mint. Each man held before him his little glass of syrupy green tea. Hadj Mohammed Drawi, who was superintending the building of Frobisher's white house near Arzila, sat a little removed from the rest, fingering a rosary.

"Why did I remain?" said Frobisher, reflectively chewing the words of the question he repeated, and gazing dreamily out past the questioner into the violet heart of the valley, where a little stream, invisible in this twilight hour, murmured and gurgled over the flat stones on its way down from the springs among the olive hills. "What drew me, you say? But is not that to ask a mere man to explain the inwardness of the workings of Allah the One?"

"Ah! So you were drawn as far as Mohammedanism too, were you?"

"I have not said that."

"No; you must forgive me. But I wish you could tell me of the beginning; how it came about, your cutting the old life so entirely for one you had never known before."

"My friend, I fear I cannot explain. But from this distance it does appear to me that I cut the old lifelessness for new life, which one must know for life at a glance; instead of, as you say, cutting the old life for one I did not know. As for what wakened me, as I said, that is the sort of question which a man may not answer from his own knowledge. The Manchester business man you knew did not inherit the bat-eyed sordidness you found him wrapped in from both parents. Spanish blood came to me from my mother, who was an artist. She must have seen things themselves and not merely the market value of things. Some gift of hers to me, long neglected, may have brightened into consciousness under these warm skies. 'Whose hand shall measure God's span?' You know the Moorish saying. But it was wonderful, wonderful—in one day!"

And now there were stories and to spare in the

man's eyes as he gazed in silence out into the evening haze of the valley below; stories and to spare, for who could read them.

"On the morning of the 9th October," he began, speaking in as low and expressionless a voice as that affected in conversation by a Moorish aristocrat, "in infidel-afflicted Tangier, I concluded the last task I performed in the vexatious vanity which is called business. Outside that futile pursuit it seems I had never done anything in all my life. Poor, starved creature that I was, I believe I had never thought anything outside business. That morning I finished business—el hamdu l'Illah![1] It happened that this was the first day of an important Moorish wedding in Tangier, and during the afternoon the great Sôk[2] was an *Arabian Nights'* picture such as you know well. Powder plays were unceasing, the horsemanship being wonderfully dashing and fine. Story-tellers and snake-charmers drove a thriving trade. The Sôk was absolutely thronged, the men in new slippers, fresh lemon-coloured, the crooning women muffled in snowy haiiks, the children clad in all the colours of the rainbow, and others devised of men. Ghaïtah, shibbabah, and t'bal,[3] filled the hiving air with sound, if not with music. The jangling bells of the water-carriers with their dripping, laden skins, and the nasal cries of the sweetmeat pedlars pierced the mass of other sound shrilly, and presently the call to evening prayer overrode all else and brought momentary calm.

"Jostled here and there among the throng, I wandered, like a man walking in his sleep, half stupefied, yet more, far more receptive than ever in

[1] The praise to Allah! [2] Market-place.
[3] Flute, reed and drum.

"WITHIN A FEW HOURS' JOURNEY OF GIBRALTAR"—TANGIER, FROM THE BAY

PHILLIP FROBISHER'S IMPRESSION

AT the time of the story Phillip Frobisher had just ceased to be "young Mr Phillip," or "Phillip Frobisher, Junior," and had attained the solid dignity of "Mr Phillip Frobisher of Messrs Frobisher Bros.," the well-known Manchester spinning firm. His Spanish-born mother, a landscape painter whose work had brought her credit in Paris and London, he had lost during childhood. The grave, shrewd, self-contained father, whose recent death had made of Phillip a full partner in the business, had systematically and consistently schooled his only son in the traditions of the "house." Phillip Frobisher had been brought up not so much as an independent human entity as a future partner in Frobisher Bros. The other two members of the firm were slightly reduced reproductions, rather paler in tone than the original, of Phillip's father.

Phillip was a tall, personable fellow, grave like his father, rather less shrewd and more sanguine, darker of skin, and more smooth and fleshy in outline, but otherwise the same solid, steady-gaited, level-headed sort of person. Any display of emotion had been impossible in the presence of the father. Phillip had grown up without inclination toward this or any other sort of display. The traditions of the house did not demand such things. They demanded calm, grave, courteous concentration during business hours,

half-moon, and close at hand a sleepless wight strummed languidly at his gimbri, and murmured of the one God, and of gazelle-eyed loves of his own in Beni Aroos. When I stumbled into my bedroom, as the daybreak call to prayer was booming across drowsy Tangier from its emerald-sided minarets, Hamadi here lay across its entrance, far gone in sleep. Dear life, how far was I already from the counting-house in Manchester!"

"'You had better ride with me to-day; I shall make a short stage of it. This rascal here can come along, too, to see you safely back to-morrow. You had better come and have a taste of camping out.'

"'But how shall I find a horse?' I asked. He turned to 'this rascal,' my Hamadi here, and bade him go find horses for us both. And so, without thought, the thing was done. It—was—done; and—and I remained; and—that is all!"

"But—but, my dear fellow, that accounts for a day's journey. You have been seven months in the country. They tell me you have sold out from your firm at home. You have a house building; you—well, look at you!"

But Frobisher was looking fixedly, dreamily out into the soft heart of the young night. However, he may have seen the picture of himself, his reincarnation, there, for he resumed gravely,—

"Well, we set out after mid-day breakfast, Hamadi and myself, with my picturesque new acquaintance and his little caravan of four men and three times that number of mules and horses. Just so and not otherwise did men set out when Abraham's flocks grazed over virgin hills in those glad, dim springtides of the earth's youth. And so, you would say, a greasy

Barbary Jew sets out on a blood-sucking journey of extortion among his oppressed and swindled Moorish debtors. Oh, I grant all that freely enough. Only—I am trying to tell you why I remained; the thing as it was, that is the thing as I saw it. As I see it. I had lived in Manchester. I had perversely looked long enough at the sordid side of the shield. Why should I choose to look at usurious money-lenders in a land which furnishes forth living pictures of the stateliest themes and characters of the Scriptures and the Thousand and One Nights?

"I say we journeyed, then, as men journeyed in the days of Abraham, across land the very shape of which, with its sugar-loaf hills, and its rounded hillocks, against the sky-line, over which camels and laden asses, driven by hooded footmen, appeared cut out; illustrations to legends of genii, necromancy and the flashing, passionate romance of the desert, of the nomadic East. And before the sun sank behind that boulder-strewn haunt of wandering robbers called the Red Hill, we came to a halt beside a little camp prepared by men who had left Tangier that morning. Fifty yards from the camp, upon one side, was an oleander-skirted pool fed by a spring. Upon the other side was the road, the Open Road, in itself a romance of old time and of all time. A hundred twining snakes lying side by side and melting one into another as far as the eye could see; hollows beaten out of the sun-baked earth by the feet of countless thousands of horses, mules, asses, oxen, sheep, camels and men; men spurred forward by love, by fear, by hate, by ambition, revenge, greed, and by that ineradicable wandering instinct which was as quicksilver to the heels of Arabs, or ever Mohammed

brought word of the One to earth, and will be till the last Arab in the world falls, gun in hand, athwart the scarlet fore-peak of his saddle, calling upon Death to witness his unswerving faith in the singleness of God.

"To me, with my new-opened eyes, it was all very beautiful, very fragrant of the earth's young days. But the talk of my host rather jarred upon me. He aimed, I fancy, at the tone of a sporting club's smoking-room, and that purely upon my behalf. Also, he was over generous in the matter of his Rioja; a 'take no denial' host. I agreed readily when the proposal came to turn in. My host had, without assistance, emptied one bottle and the half of another of the Rioja. I fell at once into a light doze. An hour later I woke and saw that my friend lay on the broad of his back, reading by the light of a guttering inch of candle stuck in the mouth of a wine-bottle. Curiosity moved me and I glanced at the cover of his book. It was a battered copy of *Nuttall's Standard Dictionary*. Picture it—and in those surroundings.

"'Yes,' he said with a not over-jovial laugh, 'I'm not altogether a savage, you see. I never hear anything but Arabic, except when I come to Tangier. I think and dream in it. So I peg away at this occasionally, just to keep the words in my mind. And—it's not such bad reading as you might think, either!'

"When next I woke it seemed the whole world was sleeping most profoundly, and that in the most singularly beautiful pearly violet light the mind of an artist could conceive, or unavailingly strive to reproduce. It was that traveller's snare, the false dawn, as I know now. It might have been the coming of the

Kingdom of God for all I knew then. I slid out quietly from under my blanket, stepped across my host, where he lay asleep beside the tent's mouth, and tip-toed out into the open. I walked toward the oleander-sheltered pool, and then sat me down on a flat stone, for the reason, upon my life, that I could stand no more. The strange, sad, ghostly beauty of it all possessed me as a palsy might, and my joints were become as water under me. I am conscious of having wept, sitting there on that stone, as a child having won from loneliness and danger to its mother's lap. It seemed the whole world, *kamarî*,[1] was before my eyes, an unending, beautiful array of smooth hills and dewy valleys, soaked in that marvellous mother-o'-pearl light in which I felt the first of men must have seen the earth. The morning star gazed down upon me serenely radiant. Creation was at my hand, an intimate revelation of beauty. I could see the spheres slowly revolving in their appointed paths. Under the lee of my friend's little tent I could see the shrouded white forms of the sleeping Moors. Near by, tethered to stakes, the animals munched straw. I gazed down the beaten highway of a hundred trails, and presently a dim, white figure approached along that highway, smoothly, silently, swiftly drawing near from out the heart of the dawn. It was a man, loping along like a pariah dog, a stick upthrust between his neck and his kaftan, his few garments kilted above the knee, his waist tightly girdled, a palmetto bag swinging beside him, his slippers firmly grasped in his left hand. He melted past our little camp and out into the dimness of the valley beyond, without a sound; the courier from Fez.

[1] Moon-coloured.

"Here comes the day, I told myself, for the eastern cheek of heaven's face whitened suddenly. A minute later and night ruled. I had seen the false dawn. So I sat on, thinking, to see the real dawn. I was seeing so much—so very much. By Allah and His Prophet, I was seeing the dawning of my own life!

"And so when day came I decided to ride on with my host. He made me very welcome in his strange half-native home. I stayed there a month. And then—and that is how I came to remain."

My friend could glean no more from Phillip Frobisher. He has certainly "remained" ever since, save for a few brief journeys in Southern Europe. It is a simple, fascinatingly simple and patriarchal life that he leads in his great white house, with its colony of dependants, its stream-thridded garden, its peacocks and its orange-shaded courtyard, near Arzila.

As for Messrs Frobisher Bros. of Manchester, they passed from astonished solicitude to disgusted contempt. But they made a handsome thing out of Phillip's retirement. It was little he cared.

EAST AND WEST

MOROCCO is a land of tyranny, oppression and corruption. To deny that were to announce oneself a poor, unobservant student and no true lover of Sunset Land. But the casual observer is far less likely to deny than he is to exaggerate, and the error of judgment into which, of all others, he is most apt to stumble, is one of a kind so fundamental that it will distort and disguise his whole future field of observation for him if not soon corrected. This misjudgment has its origin in lack of catholicity, and is fostered by Europe's physical nearness to the land of the Moors. Briefly it lies in the application of the morals of Christendom and the ethical standards of modern Europe, in one's estimate of a Muslim community, dwelling in a land as actually remote from Europe as Tierra del Fuego. No less lacking in truth and symmetry is this sort of view of Morocco than would be a man's view of a harvest scene in rural England if the fixed standard of comparison and judgment carried in that man's mind were derived from the study of the Matterhorn in January. Near as Morocco lies to the shores of Europe, no country on earth is more entirely beyond and outside the purview of European tastes and standards. And whoso permits this truth to escape him need never hope for real insight, either into what newspapers call the "Situation in Morocco," or into the true inwardness of Moorish life.

Take, for example, the matter of slavery in Morocco. A certain type of European visitor shudders when he hears the word, and, should he pursue the beaten track to Marrakish, will be sure to tell you afterwards, with gusto, and before mention of anything else, of the slave-market he saw there. "Sold as chattels in open market, I assure you. Oh, it is an abominable country!"

Well, well, and so it may appear to the modern citizen of Christendom. We of the West cannot justify the institution of slavery. Perhaps no man truly can. Certainly we Christians cannot, but the Mohammedan is not in the same case at all. He can justify it. His religion (which is a more real thing to him than religion and temporal law together to the average Christian) recognises the institution and lays down wise and humane laws for its regulation. The Western reader is hereby recommended to the perusal of those laws in Al Koran. Slavery among white men undoubtedly involved a great deal of cruelty and barbarity. Domestic slavery among Mussulmans, in Morocco, for example, involves nothing of the sort. To our shame be it said, the thing that makes English-speaking men determined in their hatred of slavery is the fact that English-speaking men horrified the world by their barbarity when they dealt in slaves. Not so the Muslim. The average slave in Morocco has at least as good a life as the average poor man in England. He not only is not ill-treated because he is a slave, but he is not looked down upon for the same reason. He is, upon the whole, a very well-treated dependant at the worst. At the best he is the favoured "companion of the right hand" of men of power and wealth;

he holds high office and is humbly deferred to by his less fortunate fellows among freemen. No, the slave in Morocco is by no means a persecuted and pitiable chattel, but a well-cared-for household dependant, whose life is full of possibilities, and who may die a Grand Wazeer. But, as has been said, the casual Western visitor to Morocco shudders at mention of slavery.

Let us use a parable, as the Moorish wont is. Mr Blank of Brixton Hill, "educated up to the nines" (to use the phrase I heard used by one enlightened tourist to describe another in Gibraltar last year), is observantly parading the main street of Tangier. He is taken in tow by some picturesque nondescript of a resident, in whose veins are traces of half the nationalities of the Mediterranean's shores, and shown the sights. As a matter of course he is taken to the prison. Your Tangerine nondescript soon learns that horrors appeal most strongly to the inquiring stranger from the hotel. He looks through a grating into a sufficiently unpleasant dungeon, as unlike the modern white-washed cell of Wormwood Scrubbs as anything could be. England has possessed nothing like it for at least eighty years. One prisoner attracts his attention. He pushes inquiry regarding this prisoner, and feels the while like a philanthropic M.P. or a Royal Commissioner. He learns: (1) The prisoner has occupied his present quarters for just six days. (2) He is the head man of such and such a village, near the Red Hill. (3) Some travellers were robbed outside that village a month ago, and the order went thence from Tangier that the thieves be handed over to justice, and with them a fine of $400. (4) No; $400 had

not been stolen from the travellers, but 200 had. (5) The thieves were duly handed over, and were in prison. (6) No; this head man was not one of them. (7) Yes; oh, yes, he was quite innocent of the robbery. As yet only $220 of the $400 demanded from this village had been received by the Basha of Tangier.

"But what of that?" cries Mr Blank. "Here's a man innocent on your own confession, suffering imprisonment in this noisome hole for a robbery of which he knows nothing! Why, you might as well imprison *me!* Horrible injustice! And when will this poor fellow be set at liberty?"

"Ah! who shall say? Such things are from Allah. Probably when his relatives bring in the remainder of that $400."

"Horrible corruption! How much is that in English money?"

"The $180? About twenty-seven pounds."

"And if it is not paid?"

"Hadj Mohammed will remain if Allah wills it."

"What, always?"

"If it be so written."

"Good Heavens!"

"Truly, there is but one God, in whose hands are all things."

"Shameful!" exclaims Mr Blank, and walks away to regard Morocco as a sink of barbarous iniquity for the rest of his days.

And without doubt the system does fall short of perfection, even more markedly, perhaps, than do the systems of party government, trial by jury, correction by means of solitary confinement, warfare upon a humanitarian basis, and other shining trade-marks of

European enlightenment. But as to how far short the system falls Mr Blank is a poor judge (in much the same way that the average juryman is a mighty poor judge of conflicting evidence cleverly spread before him by opposing counsel), for the reason that he regards it, or rather the examples of its outworking upon which he happens, from a purely European standpoint. He, as it were, mentally sets the case in the Old Bailey, imagining the robbery in question as a burglary in Tooting, and the imprisoned headman as a sort of chairman of the Tooting vestry, who, when at liberty, administers a prosperous linen-draping establishment. Now, granting the Tooting burglary, the Old Bailey setting were well enough; and in the case of the linen-draping vestryman, Mr Blank's deductions would be admirably just. But in Tangier, you see, it is not only the prison and the pallid wretches there incarcerated that are such a big remove from the Old Bailey and Wormwood Scrubbs. The crimes are different in detail and in essence; the people, traditions, laws, customs, code, point of view, powers of endurance, values—all are wholly and entirely different. Naturally, then, when Mr Blank, escorted by his nondescript guide, peers through the prison grating in Tangier's Kasbah, he sees something totally different there also. If Hadj Mohammed, the imprisoned headman, with his cigarette between his fingers, were allowed to peer into an English prison yard when a hanging was toward, he would be at least as horrified, believe you me, as Mr Blank could be at any sight the Tangier Kasbah has to show. Indeed, I am inclined to think that a week's "solitary" in an English penal establishment would set Mohammed craving for the fetid

atmosphere of the Tangier prison—with its kief and tobacco smoke and free gossip.

In the robbery case instanced, the amount claimed by the persons robbed was $200. The amount demanded by the Tangier Basha, from the village upon the outskirts of which the robbery took place, was $400. Corruption at the outset, you say. Why, yes, from our standpoint. Several persons pocket fees in connection with crimes committed, even in England. In the ordinary course $400 being demanded from a village, the m'koddem, or headman thereof, would at once bustle about and collect $500, pocketing $100, even as his superior would pocket $200, and the Grand Vizier (if the case were one of sufficient importance to be heard of in court) a similar or a greater proportion.

"Then it comes to this," you would say, "that the villagers themselves are the only sufferers." That is pretty nearly so. And it is as well to remember that the actual robbers are probably among the villagers, and known to them. It is also probable that their plunder was really no more than half the amount stated by their victims—say $100. So that the village actually loses $400, innocent and guilty in it suffering alike. And that is an outrageous piece of injustice, in English eyes. It is not so in Moorish eyes, however, which, after all, is more to the point. The average Moor had far rather run the risk of such occasional injustice than the inevitable quarterly payment of so much from his small earnings towards the maintenance of a police system for the protection of the innocent. The villagers are each and all police in the interests of their own village. They have little or no ethical objection to robbery as a profession, and

generally find the proximity of a really clever robber something of an acquisition to the community. If perchance a man has accumulated wealth, great or small, experience teaches him to fear greedy officials far more than outlaws.

In short, the existing system, an exemplar of which so horrified Mr Blank, suits the men who live under it a deal better than would the system to which Mr Blank is accustomed.

And all this, by your leave, is not at all a defence of the Moorish system of internal administration (which is about as poor a thing in the way of administrations as may be conceived), but merely a little parable meant to illustrate the futility of judging Moorish affairs by European standards. The East is not the West, and never will be, any more than earth is heaven or hell. And what is sauce for the one will always be an emetic for the other, while the two great groups of the human family exist. The theories, beliefs, tastes, and, above all, the point of view of the one, cannot be truly adopted and assimilated by the other, no matter what clever pranks may be played in the way of skin-grafting and surface amalgamation. And for these things, as for all things that are, let each branch of the Family render praise to its Triune God, the "One Incomprehensible" and Merciful, or its One God, "Lonely and Merciful," as the case may be; for the world were a dreary place indeed if all its sons and daughters were as like as peas in the one pod.

No white man who knows Morocco (even though he be a missionary) will deny that the one kind of Moor who is never to be trusted is the foreign-speaking Moor who has been brought a good deal into

contact with Christians on the coast. His moral fibre, such as it is (rate it high or low as you choose), is invariably sapped from the native by familiar intercourse with Europeans, and he takes nothing from us in place of it, save a liberal assortment of our vices. And by the same token, what of our Western morality, our Christian virtues of temperateness and self-control, once we slide far enough into the life and customs of the East? And that question reminds me that I have the story of poor Pat Derry. It shall be given here for the point it illustrates, and for what it is worth.

THE STORY OF PAT DERRY

"I GUIDE! I guide! Ihyeh—I guide!"

The too-persistent wight who thus chanted his claim upon public attention sat crouched beside the hotel's front steps, a blurred, picturesque break in the moonlit emptiness of a sea-fronting terrace. In that light the bay beyond was a crescent of molten lead, its two horns, the gun-mounted port arsenal (impressive till you learned that the guns were fitted for no tougher work than that of saluting), and the old tower which links decadent modern Morocco to the Mauretania of Roman occupation. In the crescent's shimmering centre the Sultan's navy rode at anchor; an old merchant steamer, purchased from the infidels and used, when not engaged in the transport of pickled rebels' heads, chiefly for the purpose of carrying grain for his Shareefian Majesty's troops from one port to another.

Inside the white hotel was electric light and silence. Hotel and electricity both were spawn of the infidels, and established there on Moorish territory, because that the Sultan, when wearied by the giving of many refusals, had given his consent. In the little hall office, the mæstro, scanning figures, sipped his evening coffee. In the bend of the marble stairway a sloe-eyed Spanish chambermaid sat chewing nougat. In the passage between kitchen and dining-

hall, two Moors, waiters, squatted on their heels, smoking kief. In the drawing-room, the Spanish widow resident ogled provocatively a middle-aged English tourist, who drank champagne at thirty-two pesetas a bottle, and shared the same with his neighbour at the *table d'hôte*. In this way, then, the widow paid for her wine. She was scrupulously honourable. She postponed her serious evening rendezvous with the young gentleman from the Italian Legation by exactly thirty minutes each night, to permit of the just settlement of this wine and ogle barter.

As for me, I lounged in the entrance way, looking out over the terrace at the moonlit bay beyond; marvelling at the blackness of the Hill of Apes, picturing to myself the doings of the crooked, yard-wide streets of the city behind me, wondering how it could be that I had stayed away from the glamour and fascination of this bloody but beautiful Morocco for so long a stretch as eleven years. I had landed no longer ago than the afternoon of that very day. And the epicure in me had bade me land as a tourist, telling no one of my coming, seeking out no old friends, and allowing myself to be borne off to the hotel by a jabbering donkey-man. "Thus," the epicure had said, confident in its undying foolishness, "shall you taste again the savoury sting of first impressions; so shall you lend subtle bouquet to your pleasure."

"I guide! I guide! O, N'zrani, b'Allah! I guide. Naddil! Jirri!" (I will arrange! Haste thou!)

The discordant wretch beside the steps was mazy with hasheesh, as I had seen at a glance. His head far back in a dingy djellab-hood, he had crooned

over his "I guide!" till recollection of his objective had left the man. Suddenly he had been wakened to realities, probably by hunger for food, or for opiates. Hence his exclamations, and the boldness which made him pluck at my coat. This clouded my charmed vista; it interfered with my enjoyment of the moon-washed scene.

"Seer fi-halak-um!" (Get hence!) I snapped, forgetting that the use of Arabic was out of keeping with my *rôle* as tourist.

The Moor started dreamily to his feet. His obedience cuffed me to repentance. Was I not a tourist and fair game?

"All right," I said in English. "Go ahead! I come."

And with a gesture I explained myself, accepted the would-be guide's services, and assured to him the kief and coffee money which his soul desired. He grunted, as though his unaffected satisfaction required explanation, and forged ahead of me on the sands, bound apparently for the city gate.

At least the tattered rascal no longer worried me, for he had no other English than the brief lie that introduced as guide a beggar who lived idly upon bounty, and had never thought of playing guide until that evening, when an empty kief-pipe and an empty belly combined to inspire an effort of some sort. So much I gathered from the mutterings which reached me from out the djellab-hood of my escort.

We reached that corner whence one advances either to the city gate, or, by the hill road, to Tangier's great outer Sôk. The would-be guide hesitated. The business was strange and distasteful to him.

"Nay," I heard him muttering in Arabic. "Others may show Tanjah to the Nazarene to-morrow. I will take him to the Fool's Fandak, where I shall be fed and he shall give me money to buy hasheesh from some traveller withal—im sha' Allah!" (By God's grace!)

This rather interested me, and I followed along the hill road contentedly enough. The city might wait. My time was my own, B'ism Illah; and I needed no guide in those familiar intricate alleys. Also, I desired knowledge as to what and where the "Fool's Fandak" might be. A fandak, you must know, is a place. No lesser or more particular word will serve. It is generally an enclosed space in which beasts are tethered, and in the cloisters about which men may rest and eat and gossip. Attached to your fandak there may or may not be a house; there will almost certainly be a smell, biting, acrid and far-reaching, the odour of congregated men and beasts in a land where sanitation is not.

As we bent our heads to escape contact with the lamp outside Hadj Absalaam's little Sôk coffee-house, a breath of wind from the sea—no more than a careless yawn, an out-puff of drowsy Africa's breath, so to say—lifted my escort's djellab-hood backward to his left shoulder and showed me the face of the man. I confess to starting back a pace. Morocco is full of disfigured faces, but you might almost have said my guide had no face at all. It was just a flattened expanse of cross-seamed skin; a slanting gash for mouth, two fiery eye-holes, and—no more; a night-marish and horrible sight.

"Tortured in a country kasbah, or man-handled and left for dead in some mountain gorge,' I told

THE MAIN STREET OF TANGIER

myself; and was relieved when the poor wretch jerked forward the mask-like hood of his djellab.

We crossed the Sôk, mounted by the British Legation, and dipped into the valley beyond. Just then my nostrils became aware of the unmistakable proximity of a fandak. Sure enough we halted a minute later at a great gateway set in a wall of aloe and prickly pears; and, odours apart, I heard the stamping of heel-roped animals and the monotonous twanging of gimbri strings; sounds thridded by a weak, unceasing tootling upon a wheezy ghaïtah or flageolet.

"Give a little money, N'zrani!" exclaimed my guide, extending his right hand, scoop-wise, before me, and speaking in his own tongue—the only one he knew.

"A nice sort of guide," I thought. Had I been truly a tourist and strange in this country the situation had been disconcerting enough without doubt. We were some distance from the protecting publicity of Tangier's lights. "For what purpose, rascal, should I give thee money?" I said sharply, and in my best Moghrebin.

"That I may have hasheesh and kief," replied the Moor, with no inflection of surprise in his voice.

"H'm! We shall see. There is earning to be done here as well as giving, sir guide. If this be thy 'Fool's Fandak,' lead on. I will rest here awhile and drink a glass of coffee."

There was no startling the fellow. He was a most singularly imperturbable dog. It may be that his phlegm was born of hasheesh, however, or that he fancied most tourists passed their evenings in this manner. At all events, with a sharp tug at a

palmetto cord, my guide lifted the stone which kept the fandak gate latched, and we entered a roomy courtyard or corral, wherein a score of mules, stallions and donkeys were fidgeting over the wispy remains of their supper. A pool of light in one of the farther corners of this yard indicated the opening by which one reached the humanly-inhabited part of the fandak. This corner my guide steered for, I after him, picking my way cautiously among miry foot-ropes and loose cobbles.

From the pool of light we passed into a very spacious, oblong apartment, ventilated in Moorish fashion by narrow perpendicular slits in its walls close to the raftered roof, and by the ever-open doorway. On the walls two great wicks floated in Moorish lamp-brackets of oil, and about the paved floor stood a few cheap German lamps. Some two score men, all Moors, lounged about the room, which had no other furniture than mats, rugs and half a dozen little tables each about six inches high. Two groups were card-playing. Two men were strumming at gimbris, their eyes fixed as hemp will fix a man's eyes. One made his moan listlessly upon a ghaïtah; and the rest, lighting, knocking out and relighting long kief-pipes, gossiped, or lay at ease, silent.

At the far end of the apartment a man sat bolt upright, scanning a newspaper through steel-framed spectacles. His dress was nondescript and negligent to the verge of indecency, but purely Moorish. Yet there was the newspaper! This man sat upon a mattress. One guessed it was his sleeping-place. Suddenly he turned his head toward the door; a movement of the man who had brought me to this "Fool's Fandak" had caught his ear. The light fell

across his unshaven chin. I stared. The man moved and caught light upon the upper part of his face. I started forward.

"Good God, Derry! What—what do you here?" I cried, and strode forward, careless of my booted feet, and scattering a row of slippers by the door as I moved.

"Eh? Oh—hang it! Where have you come from? U'm? Sit down!"

I squatted on the mattress beside him when our hands had met. After touching my hand I noticed that he mechanically raised his own fingers to his lips, Moorish fashion. The last occasion upon which I had taken this man's hand had been somewhat otherwise. It was eleven years before, and the young Irishman had then been setting out upon the third of his adventurous exploring journeys in the interior, disguised as his custom was as a Moor, at the head of a little caravan of seven beasts and four men. A week later I had left the country. And now—now I sat down beside Derry on his mattress.

"Well, whose is this Fool's Fandak, anyhow?" I asked, feeling my way among the innumerable questions engendered by the situation.

"Eh? Heard that, then, have you? It's mine."

"Well, but—do you—I mean—"

"Yes, I live here; it's my show. It's not exactly a business; not a paying concern, you know. But it doesn't cost much. You knew that I had a little money of my own. Yes, I live here. I wonder no one's told you. Of course, the white men don't know me—now, you know. They'd tell you I'd gone Fantee; lived native, or—something. I do, in a way. The clothes? Oh, yes; one picks up habits. Yes, I

live here right enough. Let me see; nine, ten—over ten years now. Have a—er—won't you smoke?"

Kief-pipes lay before my old friend, but nothing nearer a white man's taste. He had just noticed it. I drew cigarettes from my pocket.

"Look here, Derry," I said, whilst taking a light from him, "I don't want to pry, you know. *Chacun à son goût*, and—and so on; but what the Dickens are you driving at anyway? How do you come to be living in—living here?"

He regarded me heavily, and I noted with regret the yellow cloudiness of his eyes. I thought he seemed to be weighing in recollection's scales the quality of our friendship as warranty for my curiosity.

"Well," he said slowly, "it's a queer, beastly sort of story. But if you want it, and won't repeat it to any of the other Christians in Tangier, I'll tell it you."

I gave my word and waited.

"Well," he began, and then paused, a vaguely pained look flitting over his thin face. "By the way, ye know, you mustn't think I run a hasheesh den. Nothing of that sort. By God, 'Fool's Fandak' it may be, but it is a genuine fandak for travellers anyway. No women here; no dancing-boys, or trash of that sort. Coffee and tea I give 'em, and, mark you, I've got 'em to take the English tea at that—the black sort, I mean; less nerve-shattering than their green truck, ye know. The hasheesh and kief; well, you know what Moors are. They will have it. They bring it. I don't supply it. I—er—"

His eyes fell on the kief-pipes and little embossed hasheesh cup beside the mattress, rose then and

met mine. Then, slowly, colour mounted in Derry's face, and a silence fell between us while the Moors stared incuriously at the Fool and his guest. We must be frank, I thought.

"Hang it, old man, I can see! You don't suppose the contracted pupils and yellowness mean nothing to me. I noticed all that as soon as I saw you."

"Ah! well," he said, "habits fall upon one; grow about you from the soil you live in—hey? I don't take much."

I sighed. "But let me hear the yarn," said I.

"Well, when I last saw you I was starting for Tafilet; wasn't that it? Yes. Well, it was a devil of a bad journey in every possible way; in every possible way it was bad, was the last of my journeys. My men all died or left me in the Atlas; and I was stranded in Ain Tessa with lame beasts, and not another soul but old Hamadi the cook. One day's journey from there—I was making homeward toward Fez in disgust—I reached a big fandak, after sundown and in a howling storm of rain and wind. Oh, but it was a horrible night! Up to your girths in mud, no road, lame beasts, and poor old Hamadi whining like a wounded dog. We couldn't possibly have pitched a tent, so we went into this great fandak, thinking to make sure of one comfortable night's rest after a very exhausting week. I was keen about it. I remember thinking how fine it would be to roll in my blankets on a dry floor. Man, I ran at it; b'Allah, I ran into the place!"

Derry paused, glaring vacantly over my right shoulder toward that mouldering, wind-swept grey fandak in a savage Atlas gorge; a place that in all human probability no other white man had ever

clapped eyes on. I had tasted something of the strenuous delights of the Open Road in Morocco. I knew with what an appetite a man views walls and roofs, be they ever so crumbling and weather-worn, after a dozen hours spent in a high-peaked Moorish saddle, scrambling over rock-strewn quagmires in drenching rain.

"But it was an uncanny place, that fandak," hummed Derry, rolling the words reminiscently over his tongue; "a howling, god-forsaken Stonehenge kind of a place it was. Had been a mountain kasbah of sorts; big as a village, old as the Flood, and rottenly decayed in every stone of it. We tethered the beasts and got my pack into one of the two rooms built in a corner. You know the style. One a sort of store-room, that we made for; the other, the tea and coffee-making place, and headquarters of the fandak-keeper. Most of the travellers slept round about the roofed-in sides with their animals, and so paid nothing beyond the fee for stabling.

"You remember my horse—old Zemouri? The most gallant beast, the bravest, gamest horse ever lapped in hide."

I nodded. Derry's love for this barb had been something of a byword in Tangier in the old days. It was said that when he was so nearly starved, on the Berber trip, Zemouri munched the last score of Tafilet dates while Derry cinched up his belt a hole or two and comforted himself sucking the stones. Not many women have been better loved, I fancy.

"Well, it had been a devil of a day, apart from the going and the weather. It seemed that for a week we had passed close to mares at least once an hour. Now you remember how old Zemouri carried

on when there was a mare in the case. That journey he was worse than ever. By the Lord, the old horse was in a lather before ever you clapped saddle on his back. Mares—Heavens and earth, he could scent them miles away! He travelled in a tremble on his hind legs, and near wrenched the arms out o' me, on a Mequinez curb that would have broken some horses' jaws to look at. Barley—b'Allah, Zemouri had no time to eat; it stopped his neighing. He never closed an eye at night, and rarely ate a mouthful, if there was anything feminine within sight. Poor old Zemouri! He grew thin as a rail, and yet pranced all day like a two-year-old. He carried me where no other horse could, when he was dying; and he did it all with an air, bedad! A brave, a cavalier, was Zemouri, if ever there was one.

"Well, of course I had found him the best place in the fandak; the corner close to the rooms, with no other beast within twenty yards of him. The horse was utterly worn out, but glad of the shelter, and inclined to feed and rest, I thought. So we went into the room to boil tea and enjoy our precious comfort. We fed and rested, listening to three very decent and sociable robbers, who were for making an evening of it, in a mild sort of way, in the little coffee place. Then I made up my bed, and went out to feed Zemouri, reckoning he'd be cooled by then. He was, and I was mighty pleased with the idea of the old horse having a good night. Two brimming tumnies of washed barley I left him, and then I went in and curled up under my blanket, praising St Patrick.

"I was asleep in two minutes, and in five I was wakened by Zemouri's neighing and stamping. 'Bless the old fool,' I cried, 'what's wrong with him

now?' I climbed over Hamadi, and out into the mire and rain, to get round the arch sheltering Zemouri. An egg-pedlar had just arrived and was already chewing black bread, while his raw-boned skeleton of a mare with the egg-pack was sidling up within six paces of Zemouri, and never so much as a string to her fetlocks. I cursed the man for a pig-eating clown, and told him to tether his ramshackle mare somewhere the far side of Al Hôtoma. He stared and grinned like an idiot. God knows! It may have been hasheesh. I wasn't so used to that stark intolerable phlegm then. However, he called me 'Sidi' humbly enough, and mumbled something about moving his mare and seeing that my lordship's horse was not again disturbed. And so, as he led his poor beast away, and Zemouri quietened down quite remarkably, I went back to bed, and was asleep before I could cover myself.

"Ten minutes later Zemouri was neighing wildly and pawing the fandak wall like a mad thing. I tumbled out, swearing, and found that wretched egg-pedlar lying smoking on a pack-saddle, watching his straying mare as she dodged Zemouri's heels and squirmed in towards my barley. The man gave me his insufferable glassy grin again when I spoke to him. I didn't lift my hand. I laid hold on myself properly. I gave the man a tumni of barley and a loaf of good bread for himself, and I bade him civilly —By God, I begged him!—go and hang himself and his mare on the other side of the fandak. It made me sweat to see his grin. I coaxed Zemouri, and went back to my bed.

"But I didn't get to sleep so quickly this time. I was over-tired, I was worrying horribly about poor old

Zemouri, and all my nerves seemed in a listening strain, shivering like harp-strings. However, I dropped off after a while and slept a few minutes. Then Zemouri brought me out in one bound, my skin all pricking. The mare was browsing about within a few yards of my horse, and the pedlar, back in his old place, chewing my bread and staring stupidly, half asleep, at his beast. I was angry. Oh, yes, too angry to dare say much. I drove the pair out as a man shoos poultry. Zemouri hadn't eaten six mouthfuls and seemed to be treading on hot irons. I reckon my temperature was well past fever point when I got back to bed.

"I don't know if you've ever been placed that way, to be so dog tired that you ache with it in every muscle, and yet to be in such a feverish sweat of irritation that you can't even lie still, leave alone sleep. I was listening. My God, how I listened! That was the trouble. I could not give over listening, with every hair on my head and every pore in my skin, it seemed. It was—"

Derry paused, staring over my shoulder as before.

"Well, to cut the yarn shorter the same thing happened seven separate times. Seven times that poor wretch of a pedlar grinned and stared stupidly in my face, when fury was boiling out at my pores like steam at a safety-valve. What possessed the pedlar, heaven knows. The devil possessed me. I could have sat down and cried to see dear old Zemouri using up the last drops of his vitality so. But I was too red-hot with irritable fury and aching weariness.

"The seventh time came, and the pedlar grinned again. I still think he had no right to grin in that

maddening, fat-headed way at a wretch in my condition. Poor chap! There was a big mallet there, used for driving in tethering stakes. I lifted it above my head. I felt myself foaming at the mouth. I couldn't speak to that staring, grinning thing. The muscles in my arms leapt to strike him. I smashed that mallet down full and square on the pedlar's glassy face. I felt the thing give—horrible! I swung the mallet again and again—all over him. I jumped on him with both feet. I—and then men came running from everywhere, and I stopped. I knew I had killed the pedlar; I had murdered a defenceless man. I heard the people hiss at me like serpents. I saw them turn the body, find no life in it, and turn again to me. I was very cold. The mallet I still held. I was very cold. By the saints, how cold and still I was, who had been so hot!"

The egg-pedlar could never have stared more fixedly than poor Derry was staring over my shoulder now. I thought I should not get another word out of him. But presently his attitude became relaxed, his figure, as it were, caved in. I noticed then how the last decade had aged and broken up the sinewy young Irishman I had known. "I must get him out of this hemp-chewing, tea-sipping death-trap somehow, if he is to live at all," I told myself. Then he went on again, speaking very listlessly, and with a slurring economy of words.

"I don't know how we managed to get out of that place alive, Zemouri, Hamadi and me. If they'd 've guessed I was a Christian the Moors would have torn me in pieces. As it was I kept the mallet and let my gun be seen. You know what Moors are—in the country, too. A man more or less! He is dead, it

was written. You know the tone. I gave the fandak-keeper four dollars and told him to see to a burying. Then we got away with our animals before daylight. But I had to live with myself, you see. You might think I had left that dead pedlar behind, got quit of him. But I hadn't, by thunder! He rode on my back that day, and I've never been free of his smashed grinning headpiece since. Eh?"

I had not spoken.

"But he hasn't worried me so much of late. I fancy I've pretty near worked clear. It's odd, you know, but I've an idea that the nearer I get to him—if he went to the place I'm going to when he died—the freer I get of him. And that's queer, isn't it?"

"H'm! But how about this place and your living here?" I asked.

"Why, don't you see that's how I'm working it off? I murdered a Moor in a fandak; and a pretty bad fandak, too. Well! This is a pretty good fandak, don't you see? And Moors come and go here as they like, and never a bilyun to pay. It's all free. My little two-fifty a year was for life, you know. Oh, I'm working it off. You'll excuse the habit, but I must have a pipe," he said with a dismal sort of a smile. And he filled and lighted a long kief-pipe with an ease of familiarity that my gorge rose to see in a white man.

I had to leave him at last, for I had no notion of sleeping in that kief-clouded den. He took hasheesh before we parted, and I left him pretty muddled. A strong man in a way, I thought, and beyond the ordinary true to an active conscience. Yet, in another way, how pitiably weak! Perhaps I did not rightly understand living native then. I

know more of it now. And I have never met a man strong enough to do as Derry had done, and still—and yet not do as he had done in the ways of weakness.

Next morning I found that beggar-guide crooning on the hotel door-steps, bemused and hasheesh-drunk. He asked me for money, and remembering that I had paid him nothing the night before, I tossed the wretch a few reales and turned to leave him.

"You talk with the Nazarene at the fandak. He tell you everything, eh?" said the beggar, in Arabic. "Maybe you do not believe. Christians believe nothing. But it is all true—true as Al Koran. Ihyeh, all true; all true!"

I wondered why the man chuckled, and how he knew. I could see he was in no condition to weigh his words.

"What is true?" I asked him. "What do you know about it?"

"What does old Cassim know? Ha! Ihyeh, old Cassim knows many things. What do I know? Look! Here is the face the Christian smashed with his mallet in the fandak by Ain Tessa! What do I know? I know I have grown fat these ten years in the Fool's Fandak. Not for nothing was Cassim's face smashed. What do I know?—Ihyeh! But, Sidi! the white lord will not tell his Christian brother of these things. It were not well that an old man should lose his home. I—I—Cassim sayeth many foolish words, meaning nothing. What do I know? Ha! Ihyeh, ihyeh! Give a little more money, Sidi!"

He had lowered his hood again, so that I no longer had the featureless horror of his head before

me. But the creature's proximity was something more than I could stomach just then, so I walked off slowly, thinking. There was no doubt of the truth of his words, I thought. He was the egg-pedlar of the fandak. And my old friend had dragged through ten years of living death, with murder on his soul, for—this!

In my ignorance I decided I could make up for all that now. I had a horse saddled, and rode up to the "Fool's Fandak."

Yellow, frowsy, cloudy and sad, I found my friend a typical picture of the hemp slave in morning time. My news stirred him deeply, but not as a free man had been stirred by it. Rather as one who, relieved of an aching pain, would turn upon his other side and sleep, there in the bed of his sickness.

Three full days I was kept busy before I finally had him clothed as a white man and sitting in a room next mine at the hotel. And then, in the garments of his own people, he looked a strange, shrunken creature, far more of a wreck than before at the fandak. He refused to see other white men; and, after a few days, the hotel-keeper, with many apologies, complained to me of the kief smoke and smell of hasheesh in the corridor by my friend's room.

Silver stopped this complaint. But within a day or two the man came puling to me about Moors—"disreputable natives" he called them—trapesing about his hotel and congregating in my friend's room.

I did what I could, but the thing was disheartening.

One afternoon I was surprised to find Derry's room empty. I waited till sundown, but he did not

return. I had my suspicions, but barely admitted them to myself. After dinner I rode up to the fandak, foisting upon myself the pretence that I wanted to take another look at the wretched place—that monument to a good man's fatally wrong-headed devotion to a very honest conscience.

I found Derry there, as I knew I should, surrounded by flattering Moors, dressed Moorish fashion, and sipping hasheesh in honey from a gilt-flowered mug.

He never left the fandak again, for four days later the Moors came to me with word that the "Fool" was dead.

"You must forgive me, old man," I found scrawled on a scrap of brown paper that was clenched betwixt his dead fingers. "You don't understand. I know how kindly you meant. But it's better this way, perhaps. Anyhow, I think I've worked it off now.

"PATRICK DERRY."

UNDER THE PARASOL

THE highest spiritual authority in Morocco is the recognised temporal head of the realm; at this present, his Shareefian Majesty Abd el Aziz IV., whom may Allah direct.

It were not easy to define the exact nature of the Sultan's sway, his position in the eyes of his subjects. Loyalty to the throne, in the European sense of the word, is absolutely unknown, uncomprehended among Moors. Maûláná, Our Lord, as his people call him, would certainly hold no sway whatever beyond the confines of his court, and very little there, failing his spiritual rank as the first of all living Shareefs; descendants, that is, of the Prophet. Among the wilder hill tribesmen and the original owners of Morocco, the Berbers, it is this aspect of The Lofty Portal's greatness, and this alone, which lends weight to his decrees, and some glamour of sacredness to his will and person. But, withal, the tax-collecting must needs be performed by an army among the mountain Berbers, who will never carry their reverence for Allah's Anointed so far as voluntarily to pay him tribute in cash or kind. But the Berbers, it must be remembered, are not of Arab stock. Islam swept upon them at the points of the invaders' lances. Among Moors proper, reverence for the

Sultan's holy descent, and respect for the undoubted power of life and death which that descent and its position have given, are proven genuine, if only by the historical fact that even royal acts of the most revolting brutality have failed to cause a Sultan's overthrow, though several have suffered death at the hands of their personal guards, or among their women. The Moors would never rebel against their Lord by reason of his cruelty or injustice; but they would dethrone him without ceremony or compunction were his holy descent disproved, or proved inferior to those of some other royal Shareef.

The Moorish people, as a mass, have silently endured, and even now would submit to almost any enormity in the shape of oppression from an acknowledged Sultan. Yet if, at the instance of European ambassadors, for example, a measure of legislative reform were introduced which impinged ever so slightly upon religious precedent or established tradition, the submissive hive of toiling humanity that peoples Morocco would rise with the unanimity of a drilled army and wipe that reform out of existence. But if some poor half-crazed f'keeh dreamed a dream, journeyed afoot to the Court in far Marrakish, or Fez, fell upon his knees before the Shadow of the Sacred Parasol, and urged the same measure of reform as being the teaching of his vision (though that vision were born merely of an empty stomach by over-indulgence in hasheesh), the reform would be universally adopted law and practice throughout the Far West before a dozen moons had waxed and waned.

In name and theory all Moorish Sultans are absolute autocrats. As a fact, history shows that as

with Christian monarchs so it has ever been with rulers of Islam in Morocco and elsewhere; when a strong man succeeds to the Parasol he becomes actually an autocrat; in the case of weaker saints the autocracy is only nominal. The Moorish Court has always (and at the present time more than ever before) been so constituted that only a very strong man could dominate it and bend its various influences to fit his own will. The immediate *entourage* of the ruler has generally contained one minister capable of driving his master under pretence of slavishly following him.

The hareem of most Sultans has provided at least one dominating personality, and is always a power to be reckoned with by those whose fate it may be to have dealings with the Moorish Court. The Oriental predilection for the society and companionship of those whose position is practically, and often technically as well, that of slaves, is particularly noticeable in Morocco, both at court and in all great households. Such petted companions do not criticise one; they flatter. Their very presence and their bounty-fed sleekness is a sort of tribute, pleasing to the Eastern mind as are the misfortunes of his neighbours to the Western person of culture.

But, regarded in another way, there is no master so masterful as your pampered dependant. Nazarene Bashadors, in their official wisdom, may not always recognise the fact, but fact it is that the Moorish Government rarely orders a new supply of tents, far less signs a treaty, without the approval of some power behind the curtain, some stained and scented favourite who sits rustling her silks, jingling her bangles, sucking confectionery, and playing with human destinies in the eternal twilight of the hareem.

The women-kind of Moorish Sultans are always a large and varied assortment, embracing beauty in black and white, and all the shades between. Martinière, who should know, speaks of thirteen Frenchwomen being in the hareems of the last three sultans. It is well-known that the mother of the present Sultan, a woman who was always consulted by Moulai Hassan in affairs of State, and who no doubt dictated her son's policy upon his real accession after the death of "Father" Ahmad, the Regent-Wazeer, in 1900, was a Circassian bought in the mart at Constantinople by the late Hadj Abd es Salam, and presented to his Shareefian Master, the then reigning monarch. And it was because this reputedly beautiful Circassian became her lord's favourite that her offspring, Abd el Aziz, was trained for the Parasol, and chosen by his father to succeed to it, whilst some of his brothers, or step-brothers, were imprisoned, others exiled to Tafilet, and others buried in the obscurity of remote governorships.

In view of these things it will readily be understood that competition for entry to the Shareefian hareem is keen. Great nobles and ambitious ministers will bribe the arifahs, or wise women, in charge to admit their pretty daughters and press them before the Sultan's notice at suitable seasons, such as on a Thursday afternoon, the eve of Muslim Sabbath, when the late Sultan always had his women paraded through the hareem gardens, in order that he might choose two or three to bear him company during Friday. The present writer knew a Moorish official who, fancying his position was a little shaky, decked out the pearl of his household, his favourite fourteen-year-old daughter, and sent her as an offer-

ing to the hareem of the Elevated of Allah. It delayed his downfall by precisely twenty-one days, at the end of which time he was flung into prison and the whole of his property confiscated by the Sultan. It may have been that the daughter was found wanting, or that his Shareefian Majesty never set eyes upon her pearliness. In any case, it was written, and the profit thereof, to the Shareefian coffers, was considerable, for Hadj Mohammed had been ever a great "eater-up" of the district under his rule, though a good fellow enough in his way, at liberty now, and, so Fez gossips affirm, creeping into favour again. May Allah have a care of him; his was a most admirable seat upon a horse.

Putting aside intrigues and conspiracies, which are no more to be numbered than are the sands of the seashore, or the sins on a Wazeer's conscience, the Moorish Court is generally more prolific of princes and princesses, shareefs and shareefas, than anything else. Each one of these saintly little personages is brought up in an isolated sanctuary, each boy among them having a slave of his own age told off as his companion, to be called brother. Disinterestedness is rare in most Oriental countries. By this method the young shareef is supposed to be sure of one devoted adherent through life, and all things considered, he is perhaps quite as safe to achieve this as the average European is likely to retain the disinterested attachment through life of his god-parents, for example, or any other of his relatives. The girls are matrimonially disposed of as speedily as may be, and without much effort or ceremony. They inherit no rank. The boys are married off at State functions directed by the Sultan, and only the intended heir

(each Sultan appoints and chooses his own successor) is given high rank and brought prominently before the public as the Ruler's son.

So much, then, for the greatest of all checks upon absolute autocracy in Moorish government—those that may be called domestic. Then there is the company of the 'Aoláma, or "the Learned Ones"; the theologians and commentators, who, as experts in Mohammedan custom and the lore of Islam, are supposed to advise Majesty at all points as to what Alkoran counsels and what it forbids. It must not be imagined that these grave and reverend seigneurs form a Parliament or an episcopal bench. On the contrary, they have no fixed status, and the very number of them is constantly changing and never known. One may only say of these f'keehs that they preserve and expound religious tradition, which in the world of Islam means public opinion and public morality. Their opinions are always asked in every matter of moment, because at the last analysis it will be found that in Morocco all progress, movement, policy, the whole life of the nation, hinges upon and is moved by the Mohammedan faith. Moorish Sultans are always sufficiently politic to seek the countenance of the 'Aoláma, because whatever the 'Aoláma approve Morocco will swear to and abide by. On the other hand, the Elevated Presence, by token of his descent and position, is himself the chief of all "wise men," and practically holds the 'Aoláma in the hollow of his hand. Hence its members invariably ascertain the tenor of the Sultan's wishes (the parents of his convictions) before themselves expressing an opinion. And should the Elevated Presence be bent upon a course that is clearly contrary to Al Koran's

teaching, the 'Aoláma are apt to ponder solemnly awhile, and then announce that the point involved is clearly one of those left for the decision of Allah's Anointed, who, as the Father of Islam, is the best judge of its interests. But, natheless, the 'Aoláma is a slight check upon the Autocrats of all the Moors, and a very present refuge in negotiation with friends, and in the fending off of infidels with their thirst for "improvements."

Descending the scale of authority, from the Lofty Portal's own sacred person, one must reckon first with the prime favourite of the hour. That favourite may be a woman; that is an unseen, and accordingly the more absolute, power. If a man, the favourite will probably be Grand Wazeer (Wazeer el Kabeer) and, to all intents and purposes, the active ruler of the land, having control over all monies and appointments, with unlimited power for oppression and imprisonment, and practical power of life and death. If an able and ambitious man, this favourite will probably unite the position of Wazeer el Barráni, or Minister of Foreign Affairs, with that of Grand Wazeer. But, in Tangier, where the Ministers of the European Powers reside in their Legations, there is Hadj Mohammed Torres, Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, who is really the only Moorish official in personal touch with the Representatives of Western civilisation, and, according to the Christian estimate, the only honourable and straightforward Moorish official living. Hadj Mohammed is reputed to have passed his eightieth year; his position is one rich in opportunities, his is a country in which official salaries are practically unknown and official rapacity a thing looked for and expected, yet, to his lasting credit be it said, this

Commissioner for Foreign Affairs is still a man poor in worldly gear, and one of his sons, a working shoemaker in a cabin hard by the official residence, has made slippers for me, while his brother sold candles in a cupboard a little farther on. Hadj Mohammed is probably the only office-holder in Morocco who does not accept bribes as a matter of ordinary routine. Be it noted, as an instructive fact, that he is far from being the most popular of officials among his own countrymen.

There are two other important Ministers in the governmental system of Sunset Land, those of Finance and the Interior; and the latter has far more to do with money than the former, for the Minister of the Interior has the nomination of provincial governors in his hands, and these be posts for which men must pay heavily, in hard coin, in flocks and herds, and in goods and chattels; whereas the Mûl el Mal (he of Finance) presides over an exchequer, details as to which are probably known to no man—a treasure which is divided between the three capitals, Fez, Mequinez and Marrakish, and which, it is said, can be opened only by agreement between the keepers, the governors of the palaces, the chief eunuch, and the wise woman in charge of the hareem.[1] Gentlemen of considerable official dignity and influence are the Bearer of the Parasol (mûl el m'dal), the Fly-flicker (mûl el shûash), the Master of Ceremonies (mûl el meshwar), the Executioner—with the gun—(mûl el m'kahel), the Spear-bearer (mûl el mzreag), the Headsman (seeaf), the Flogger (mûl el azfel), the Tea-maker, Tent-layer, Cushion and Spur-bearers, and a few others whose strength lies

[1] *See* Meakin's *Moorish Empire*, p. 206.

in the known fact of their personal nearness to the Elevated Presence. All these, like the various Ministers, like Allah's Anointed himself, expect to be approached only by those who bring "something in the hand." The more important the person, the more considerable must the "something" be, and if it is a personage of highest rank whom you would interview, then must a list of your intended presents precede you, and according to the nature of that list so shall your reception be, cordial or brusque, pleasant or forbiddingly cold.

In Morocco the Court is more distinctly the centre of all light and authority than would be the case in any Western land, and this for the reason that daily sight of his Lord is the only gauge by which an official may judge of the safety or otherwise of his tenure of office, of his life and liberty even, and of his freedom to prey upon his less highly-placed fellow-man. Also, to the man about the Court, each day brings its chances of gifts in store. By a well-chosen present, an aptly-turned phrase, by the discovery of a fellow-courtier's disloyal scheming, by a deft touch of flattery, by any of a hundred and one trivial chances, a sedulous dependant of the Court elevated by Allah may at any moment be raised to the highest pinnacle of power, rank and wealth, in place of some unfortunate wight, who is stripped of these gauds and loaded down with chains in some rat-infested old grain-well or other dungeon—all in less time than Christians take to obtain a summons for debt or trespass.

The diplomatist or traveller who looks to find a higher code of honour (as such matters are understood in Christendom) the higher he goes in the

Moorish social or official scale is foredoomed to disappointment. Some of the most brazen liars in Morocco are men of very high standing. An English Minister once tore up a treaty and flung it at the Sultan's feet, stung to fury by the crude dishonesty of the men he dealt with. Needless to say he gained little by that. Deceit is a perfectly legitimate weapon, according to the ethics of all Oriental courts, and is used as such. In the courts of Christendom it is an illegitimate weapon, and, one gathers, is used as such. The Westerner gains nothing by losing his temper over his Oriental adversary's use of cunning; but he does gain materially by the use of judicious firmness, just as he loses inevitably when he persists in adopting toward an Eastern potentate the same attitude and tactics which have served him in dealings with his own race. Upon the whole, European official dealings with the Moorish Court are colourless and uninteresting, but I must tell here the tale of a certain unofficial transaction between Morocco and a Western Power, because I think the story too good to be missed.

THE BEACHCOMBERS

"OH, yes!" said the slighter of the two men on the beach, speaking with the last extreme of languid bitterness. "So long, certainly! And good luck—by all means, if you can place any value on wishes from me. God knows I've no further use for wishing myself. You've more grit left in you than I have, Jones!"

The other man paused. He had been strolling off along the sun-whitened sands toward the town. He turned now, with a shrug of his broad, scarcely-clad shoulders, and regarded curiously the limp, recumbent figure of the man he was leaving—leaving stretched there in the shadow of a ruined fort, a crenellated shell, with toothless, half-buried cannon, and walls which glib guides dub Roman.

"I told you my real name yesterday," he said, with brusque geniality.

"But I didn't reciprocate," rejoined the other, screwing one elbow further into the powdery sand. "Jones is a good enough name for you, isn't it? And I'd just as soon continue as Smith till—till the only kind of luck I wish myself comes; and that's death!"

"Rats! One square meal and a cigar would alter all that, sonny. By the hokey, a good fat kesk'soo an' a cigarette 'ud see me through. An' I'll worry 'em out o' this blooming old city to-day, too; you can kiss th' Book on that, Mister Smith—since it's Smith an' Jones you prefer. So long!"

Now kesk'soo is a purely Moorish dish, and Jones was but a recent arrival in Sunset Land, whilst the other man had spent many years in different corners of it. Yet Jones's mouth watered at mention of kesk'soo, while nothing short of a European hotel meal, with napery and attendance, would have served to stir Smith's wearied imagination. That was the loss of Smith; or perhaps, as Jones would have called it, "his damned gentlemanly way."

By exactly what manner of devious and downward-tending bypaths a man having such a way with him had happened upon just Smith's present level in the social structure, Jones had not yet learned. A certain indolent reticence was part of the slender man's way. As for Jones, his little affair was simplicity itself. He had killed his man in Gibraltar (though himself modestly deprecated the distinction, saying, "An' it wasn't a man, when all's said, but only a snickering Rock-scorp pimp; a *thing* in patent-leather boots an' a pink-striped shirt; stunk like a polecat, he did, o' women's scents—rot him!") and served two years' imprisonment there for manslaughter "under great provocation." An English-Australian sailor, second mate of a tramp, he had been judged by his peers on the Rock, who admitted that the creature slain only missed inclusion in the vermin list "for lack of a tail." His two years served, Jones had drifted across the Straits, "to grow my hair," and in Morocco, unfortunately, had taken to stone-face gin from Hamburg—a false and fiery friend who strews all the world's beaches, and its forsaken guts and gullies, with the stark victims of its fierce *liaisons*.

Jones had become a feature of the town, even as one of its smells, its fountains, its city-gate beggars, or the mad f'keeh of the camel fandak. So had Smith, slim, languid Smith, whom men had known by another name in Spain, in London, in Fez and elsewhere. But this difference lay between the two as features of the crooked, hiving streets: Jones was grinned at good-humouredly alike by Moors and Christians, and that even when cursed by the latter sort and refused the drink or other alms he sought; but Smith was cursed and sneered at without smiles. A man mostly reaps as he sows, after all, particularly in primitive or barbaric communities. And Smith dealt openly in listless contempt, and in the snarls of stung pride, cracked self-respect, and vanity scotched and mutilated, albeit breathing and bleeding still.

"And to think it's come to this," muttered Smith in his sand-bed, when Jones's retreating figure had dwindled to the smallness of a locust—a locust showing black, not yellow, upon that sun-bleached ribbon of sand. "By the Lord, I couldn't creep much lower! A kind of partner with that—with this beggar; and—and a mighty poor partner at that; doing less than a share of the work. Grrr! Why haven't I ended it all before now? Liquor! Don't I know the whole miserable round? I don't even hanker after liquor. By Heaven! I desire no other thing than an end to it all."

The man rose in sections, cumbrously as a four-footed beast leaves the litter for its daily toil. Erect, he shaded his lack-lustre eyes with one hand—a shapely hand shielding a face by no means unrefined or ill-looking—and gazed out over the sparkling

water-rows which mark the Atlantic's meeting with the Mediterranean.

Then, with curious, mechanical deliberation, he began to shed his few garments, his sole remaining badge of civilisation.

"Fine weather for bathing," he sneered aloud; adding then an inarticulate jibe, by way of recognition of the feebleness of his spoken satire. And now, suddenly, the dignity of a fixed resolution was furnished forth upon the face of the man, over-riding the weakness of its habitual lassitude. He stepped on, across the hot, powdery sand, to the brown ribbon that won its colour and firmness from the action of the uttermost crest of the innermost breaker, the last of an unending dozen. The beach shelved steeply here, and the sea sucked hungrily to draw back each crisp curl of foam it flung upon the sands.

Smith met the first breaker with his finger-tips, and emerged on its far side, swimming. A dozen such short dives and he was becalmed in placid blue water beyond the breaker line. The thought in his mind was, "Where's the sense in grinding through the breakers all this way? Why not have finished back there among them? But there's time enough. No one to interrupt one here. Last thoughts, last wishes, regrets, pros and cons—I have no use for such. I've done all that; thought everything there is to think about the thing. Now for the end; rest. Here goes for the bottom."

He dived, there in the calm, clear water of the bay, and in his ignorance believed he had taken his last look at God's green earth, the world of which his life and temper had so sickened him. He did not

realise that this was to pit the desires of one naked shred of humanity against great and unalterable forces of Nature.

Presently he rose, spluttering, angry, gasping and humiliated, to the sunny surface. He floated idly for a few minutes. As the good air filled his lungs again it seemed turned to gall and despair.

"God! Can't I do even this thing properly?" he muttered. "I'll do it among the breakers."

So he headed for the shore, swimming slowly, rocked luxuriously by the great, unbroken rollers, which seemed smoothest and most peaceful in the moment preceding the furious crash with which they broke, and careened riotously landward in boiling torrents of white froth. Smith rose with delicious softness and ease on the back of an enormous roller. For one instant the whole ocean seemed at rest, the naked human floating idly high above it. Then the roller crisped, and broke thunderously, turning the wisp of humanity completely over and pounding him under hundreds of tons of white foam.

There was his chance, this little human who desired death. Death was roaring in his ears now. So different from diving against and through them is attempting to swim with and past Atlantic breakers.

Smith emerged, battered and gasping, in the trough.

"Ough! Hough!" He could no more keep back the gasping cries than he could avoid instinctively striking out now upon the smooth surface of the hollow. Two gasps, and with a prodigious roar the next breaker had him in its tumultuous toils.

The man had no thought of suicide now; nor life, death, misery, hope or any other consideration

occupied the mind of him. He was just an insignificant atom of unthinking human flesh and blood, beaten, bruised and gasping, struggling blindly, desperately to reach dry land.

And at the last of it, when all mental consciousness had departed from him, though he still struggled feebly, Smith's feet touched bottom, and he staggered, panting and trembling, to the line of dry sand, across which he fell on his face, helpless, gasping, with heaving chest and an unendurable thudding pain in his left side.

So he lay, through the better part of an hour; and the pitiless white sun peeled flakes of grey skin from off his shoulder-blades, while the more pitiless damnation of self-knowledge bit into the shaken soul of him. He was moodily drawing on his trousers, when the man he called Jones appeared from the landward side of the old fort.

"He's drunk, noisily drunk—fool!" That was Smith's first thought. "Gad! he's brought liquor and grub for me at all events. I *am* hungry." That was his second reflection; and, unlike its predecessor, this second surmise was correct.

"You see me, Smith?" shouted Jones. "I've struck oil. I've struck gold—nuggets—the real thing. Here, have a drink! Come along into the old humpy. I've got to talk an' you've got to listen; and we may as well feed. I struck old Bensaquin for this and I'm goin' to strike him for dollars to-morrow. Oh! but I've rung the bell this trip. We are about to retire from this beach, Mister Smith—and live on our means."

"H'm! I tried the retiring while you were gone, too, but—"

"You tried—what? You never set eyes on my

THE ENTRANCE TO A PALACE GARDEN IN MARRAKISH

colour, sonny; you couldn't. It's virgin — hey? Come on in, an' while we feed I'll stake out the claim."

Together they entered the old fort, and sat them down in the embrasure which had sheltered them for more than three weeks now; ever since their first coming together, in fact, wanderers from the poles of respectability, mutually drawn, it seemed, by the magnet of vagabondage existing for both in the tropical no-man's land of the Beach. The beach in this case happened to be a sea-shore. The Beach is everywhere, however, south and east of Europe; within and without the sound of breakers.

They had Moorish loaves, fried mincemeat on skewers, a square-face of gin and an earthen jar of spring water, with a greasy copy of *Al Moghreb al-Acksa* for napery. It was with a shrug of disgust, contemptuous hatred of all his circumstances, that the smaller man fell to upon the coarse food, but it was none the less a fact that as the meal progressed this same course food put fibre into the man's voice and movement, and light where vacancy had been in his eyes.

"So you've found a billet, have you?" said Smith, when, raw hunger appeased, he began handling the food with more decent deliberation.

"Found a billet?" echoed the other from a full mouth. "By the hokey, I've done a deal more than that. What's a billet? In a country like this, too? No, *sir*—I've found a fortune. That's what's the matter with me. A fortune for both of us. Because you've got to help me lift it; and, anyway, we're pards, whack and whack alike. Yes, sir! What d'ye think of a cool ten thousand sterling apiece, hey? Cut a tidy

dash on that, even in the old country, couldn't you? My oath! I shall take a little farm and breed a prad or two. Queer," he hummed, on a full-fed reminiscent sigh; "but the sight of a mare an' foal always did fetch me, even back home in th' old days, at Shoalhaven. That's N.S.W., you know. Ah, h'm!"

"You haven't been drinking at all, have you, Jones?" asked Smith, raising the square-face to his own lips as he spoke.

"Well, I haven't much chance while you're about," grinned the other. "But no; it's not jim-jams, sonny, but just copper-bottomed, hard-wood cert, and you can kiss th' Book on that. And now we've fed I'll tell you. You know there's a new American Consul-general here; came last month?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well! Now this afternoon old Bensaquin met me in the inner Sôk an' gave me a letter to take to the American Consul; to be given into his own hands. Up I goes to the U.S. Consulate, like any gold-braided Excellency, and asks for the Consul-general. Engaged with th' commander of the United States warship lying in th' bay there. I could sit down an' wait. 'All right,' says I; an' just strolls out on that little green balcony an' squats down in th' shade. Next minute I'd pricked up my ears. I was right under th' Consul-general's window, an' th' shutters were open, that being the shady side. 'Well, some one was saying, 'what's the exact amount of our claims just now anyway?' That was th' commander, I reckoned, because it wasn't th' new Consul's voice. 'Well, I've worried it down a bit from the original,' says th' Consul, 'and now it's a hundred and twenty thousand dollars—Moorish, you

know—an' not a cent less.' D'ye see? That's about twenty thousand sterling, isn't it?"

Smith nodded, with a fair show of interest. He was fed now, and smoking.

"'H'm,' says th' commander, 'an' you don't want to present yourself at Court before next year?' 'Jes' so,' says th' Consul. 'An' what's more, I don't want to be enforcing claims then, but making myself agreeable an' getting concessions.'

"They kep' quiet for a bit, an' then th' commander took a fresh light for his cigar. Yes, they were as close as that to the window. 'Well,' says he, between puffs, 'by what I can make of it you'd best let me play the stern and unforgiving partner, like that Jorkins chap in Dickens, you know. My orders were to hang about here while I could be of any use in settling our outstanding claims, as you know. Well, now, it don't matter a cent how I personally stand with th' Sultan. I've no particular use for th' old chap's good opinion. And I'd rather like to pay another visit to the Court anyway. I've been in this Moorish racket before, ye know—before you were out o' school-days. Tell ye what I'll do. I'll jes' steam along as far as Mogador, putting in at the little ports for a day, just to show 'em our guns. You send a courier to the Court with word that I await cash settlement of our claims at Mogador. Say my orders from Washington are all-fired peremptory. Say my ship'll wait one month on th' coast, an' that you fear I shall then come personally for settlement at Marrakish; and that failing cash up then, me bein' a brutal sailor chap, I'm likely to proceed to th' bombardment of the coast towns. I tell you that's the only way to talk to these beggars. You can rely on me. I know this country

all ends up. And at th' month's end, off I go with my little caravan to Marrakish. You'd better say a fortnight, just to stir 'em. But I'll wait a month really. You jes' tell th' old huckster, in the name of the United States, he's got to stump up to th' last cent into th' hands of Commander Hawkins. I'll do th' rest. How's that?'

"Well, they palavered a bit more, an' th' Consul-general he reckoned it was a great scheme. 'That courier shall start for th' Court to-night, captain,' says he. And so they settled it; an' presently I got my letter delivered an' cleared off to old Bensaquin for backsheesh, thinkin' th' thing out in my mind as I went along. 'Now,' says I to myself, 'here's twenty thousand pounds as good as goin' a-beggin'. Twenty thousand isn't here nor there to th' U.S. Government anyway. But it 'ud be th' devil an' all of a fine thing for Smith an' me—th' makin' of us. It's lying round kind of loose in this old Bible-story country.' Now what do I want to get th' fingerin' of it? I want mighty little. There's mighty little 'twix me an' twenty thousan' notes. I want a partner; a gentlemanly sort of chap who knows th' native gab inside out. That's one thing. Then I want just enough money to take me an' my pard down to Mogador, in th' wake of that U.S. warship; to let us land as though from th' warship, one of us in some sort of uniform, for choice, an' get together half a dozen Moors an' animals, with a little grub, an' th' loan of a few guns. An' then, hey for Marrakish, me an' my partner!—that is th' secretary an' th' U.S. commander; an'—an' whose goin' to stop me comin' back with that twenty thou'? By the hokey, sonny, it's just the deadest bird that ever was—hey!'

"It's a most ingenious scheme," said Smith, slowly, "a most ingenious scheme; and upon my soul, I almost wish it could be worked."

"Wish it could—what?"

"Yes, wish we could have worked it. The money would be a deal more good to us than to the States. But, of course, it can't be done. You don't seriously think it could be done, do you?"

"Seriously think! Why, holy smoke, what else d'ye think I've bin talking for? Think it could be done! Man, th' thing'll do itself. Old Bensaquin will advance th' ready. I'll tell him th' whole thing, halving th' amount, an' we'll promise him two an' a half each. Do it—when you've got th' language at your fingers'-ends, an' I've got all th' particulars. My colonial! You don't seem to see what a clipper-rigged scheme this is. Why, what in blazes is there to stop us doing it?"

"The thing's on your nerves, Jones, that's why you don't see it. It's stealing, my dear man; common or garden theft."

"Oh, rats! Are we in a kid-glove sort of a position on this beach? An' who'd lose by it, anyway?"

"We should. Penal servitude, Jones; a long period."

Smith was chewing his moustache feverishly, and his thoughts, with maddening persistence, ran upon pictures of himself bowling down golden Piccadilly in a hansom to open a bank account with ten thousand pounds. Not to François Villon himself did money ever seem more sweetly desirable than it seemed to this plexus of irresolution who, a few hours earlier, had set out to quit this world for one in which money probably is not. Yet he spoke reasonably and with

indifferent wisdom, you see; and habit lent an indolent aloofness to his words which chilled Jones to the bone. Poor Jones, with his cheery muscularity, his crudeness, and his simple desire to win clear of the beach and acquire a competence!

Jones returned to the attack then, chilled and feeling that the odds were against him. He was no thought-reader, or student of such indicative minutiæ as the moustache-chewing practice, but just a plain, kindly, rather gross man, full to the throat of a scheme of golden promise that, to him, seemed morally legitimate as sea-fishing or smuggling—he ranked such things as equal—and that no doubt was as morally legitimate as the commercial cornering of foodstuffs on change.

"You've lost nerve, Smith," he said, "and that's what spoils your eye for th' colour in this scheme. It's not the scheme's fault. Th' scheme'll wash every time, an' don't you forget it. But this forsaken beach has sapped your nerve, an' you're just seein' things when you talk of penal servitude. Why, man, I could carry this thing through with both hands tied behind me. It's binnacle-steering work. Penal servitude! Penal blazes! Why—"

He talked a good deal in that strain; and at the end of it Smith said languidly, "It's simply common theft, just robbery, none the less."

Then Jones rose, shaking fragments of food from his great loose frame as he did so, and strolled out before the ruined fort in time to see the moon rising, slow and silvery, from behind the Hill of Apes. He was whistling in a disjointed, discordant manner. But Jones lacked his companion's training in indifference—the training that comes of habit. He had

really risen to hide the fact that there were tears of hot disappointment in his eyes. And he had not hidden it. Suddenly a hand fell upon his shoulder lightly, a small hand, used gently, in Smith's "damned gentlemanly way."

"Look here, Jones, don't grizzle! I'll do it. I'll go with you."

"You will? You'll work it with me? God bless you! Give us your hand on it!"

"Eh? Oh, that's all right. I daresay it's right enough. As well one thing as another," said Smith, listless as ever now the step was taken. Jones had not heard his barefooted approach, but had swung violently round at the touch of Smith's hand. And so the thing was settled.

"Ye see, I never could've attempted it without you," explained the now jubilant Jones. "Even the Sultan wouldn't be such a Juggins as to take me for a naval swell; whereas you, Smith, dashed if I shouldn't take you for something tony in th' gold-laced, Government House line myself."

"Would you?" murmured Smith, as a bored man acquiesces in a tea-table comment on the weather.

"And then there's th' lingo, you see. You'll be able to do the talking."

"Yes; I shall be able to do the talking, certainly. Do you know, I think I'll go to sleep now."

"Sleep! Oh, well, all right, old man; as you like. I shall get into the city and tackle old Bensaquin. There's no time to lose."

"Just so. I'll say good-night, then. I wouldn't give the show away more than I could help. Your Barbary Jew's a snaky beast."

So they parted, Jones striding off in the moonlight, uplifted and elate, Smith retiring to the flaky-walled embrasure which was home to them both, and there stretching himself full length upon the sand.

"Rum beggar, my word!" quoth soaring Jones. "These Old Country gentlemen—tss, tss! But I guess the real thing's in him. Smoke! if I can only rummage up something gilt-edged in the way of a uniform!"

An hour later saw him closeted with Bensaquin the Hûdi, in the heavily barred and bolted cupboard in which that venerable son of Israel lived and carried on his varied and delectable concerns.

The Jew proved wary and cautious, yet amenable. He even improved upon Jones's scheme by managing, through the good-nature of an American with whom he had business, to secure passages to Mogador for the two Christians aboard the United States warship *Hiawatha*, Commander Hawkins. And as the commanders of men-of-war do not look to take fares, this meant that the American Government gave free board and lodging, and a safe convoy through the initial stages of their adventure, to two persons bent upon diverting from the said Government's coffers the sum of twenty thousand pounds sterling.

Honest Jones was tickled to the deepest shallows of his simple soul by this aspect of the business, and ate for three at the petty officers' mess. American sailors fare plenteously and well. Even Smith seemed languidly amused and pleased, while his companion in crime was made literally to swell from pride when, on a perfect May morning off Rabat, Commander Hawkins himself called Smith to his side upon the quarter-deck and engaged that polite adven-

turer in friendly and apparently interested conversation about Morocco and Smith's business there!

This was the first of several amiable chats for Smith. Once or twice it happened that Jones was present in the flesh at these meetings. I say in the flesh, because mentally he could not have been said to take part. Commander Hawkins ignored him with a rudeness most exquisitely polite. Just before the end, the commander happened casually upon Smith alone, and addressed the young man genially, as usual. After various remarks,—

"Er—your—er—Mr Jonah, I think you said his name was; may one ask how—er—what you—"

"Mr Jones—*Jones*—is my partner, sir." Smith's eyes met those of the commander, levelly, without compromise.

"Ah! I understand. Quite so. Good-morning, Mr Smith."

The captain resumed his promenade. "Misguided young ass, all the same, one fancies. But they are loyal, these young Englishmen. Quite the public-school glare he gave me—young fool! If that Jones is not—however, it's not one's own funeral, of course."

Smith and Jones were duly landed in the man-of-war's launch at Mogador. In that they spread themselves as much as possible. Then, as unobtrusively as might be, they made their ways to the house of a Jewish merchant, a correspondent of Bensaquin's. Animals and a few Moors were there engaged, and that afternoon a little caravan rode out of the town bound for the Court at Marrakish. Smith was the central figure, mounted on a showy horse and dressed in a Spanish military uniform, tarnished yet fine, the worse for wear, but ornately frapped and gilded.

The Jewish merchant had his instructions. Native gossip was to be set moving; and native gossip would travel to the Court faster than Smith and Jones could hope to make the journey.

It was a queer embassy without a doubt; but, once clear of the coast, appearances mattered little. Smith was the American commander; Jones, the bubbling and elated, merely his secretary and lieutenant. Yet the chief was the mouthpiece of all orders, even to their cook; and, as a fact, the captain of the expedition was Jones. Jones had no Arabic. That was the loss of him. But as sheer indolence made Smith transmit his partner's orders almost literally, they were fairly peremptory and vivid, even at second hand.

One day out from Marrakish the two met a courier jogging toward the coast, the heels of his stained slippers pulled well up, his staff sticking out from the back of his neck, the slack of his crimson trousers tucked into his girdle and a big palmetto satchel upon his shoulders.

"This chap's a Sultan's special courier, I fancy," said Smith.

"Is he, by God! Hi! Stop him, partner."

Smith obeyed.

"Make him turn out his swag."

"It's as much as his life's worth."

"Well, that's not as much as twenty thou'."

Under pressure, the Moor revealed a great sealed letter addressed in Arabic to Commander Hawkins.

"Tell him that's you, and read it," said Jones.

The commander, in his tarnished finery, read aloud a flowery list of excuses, fair promises, requests for delay, and the rest of the stock cant with which

his Shareefian Majesty wards off pressing claims upon his treasury.

"H'm! All right. Pocket the letter, partner, and get that fellow to tail on to our crowd. We must make some show entering the city to-morrow."

The thing was done as the real chief ordered. The languid gentleman in uniform made it so.

At daybreak next morning two of the followers were sent on ahead to herald the approach of this illustrious mission.

"Tell them to lay it on pretty thick, partner. Say the Americano is mighty wrathy, and must have his audience to-day, or to-morrow at latest, else back we go to the coast to prepare for bombardment."

Again Smith made it so, and the main body of the caravan moved slowly forward.

Now it happened at this particular juncture that the Prophet's lineal descendant, his Shareefian Majesty at Marrakish, was in a chill tremor of anxiety anent the action of the infidel upon his south-eastern frontier. It did appear to the Sultan that the years of the French "creep in" upon his decadent realm were about to end in a final snap which would send three columns hurtling into Fez from Ain Sefra, and establish the tricolour in place of the blood-red emblem of pretended Moorish integrity. Therefore, argued the simply crafty potentate, let me by all manner of means kowtow to all other Nazarene pigs and particularly those not allied to the French pigs.

Our adventurers were hospitably and respectfully welcomed at the city gates, before a *chevaux-de-frise* of gory rebels' heads, and immediately beneath the Nazarene's Hook, that hideous spike upon which gentle Moulai Ismail of honoured memory loved to

impale Christian captives, *pour passer le temps*, and by way of impressing his puissance upon their surviving fellows.

The American Bashador was to be received on the morrow, announced the salaaming m'kaddem. Meantime, would his Excellency and suite deign to find entertainment in his Sacred Majesty's most palatial guest-house? To this his languid Excellency consented with an admirably official nod, playing his part, all unconsciously, to a miracle. His Excellency's secretary had wit enough to recognise the superlative verisimilitude of his partner's rendition of the part; yet, for himself, could not for his life refrain from the gushing urbanity of a Regent Street shop-walker when acknowledging this city-gate welcome, and hugging to himself all that it meant in the out-working of his scheme. But, fortunately for the success of his plans, the simple soul had not a word of Arabic beyond "Thank you!" and "Get away!"

Bright and early on the morrow, too early, as Downing Street reckons time, even for the taking of the morning tub, his American Excellency was summoned to the Sacred Presence. In view of the urgency of the matter in hand, and, to be accurate, of his Serenity's cold perspiration over news from his south-east frontier, the audience was to be a private one; in a room of the palace, that is, and not a-horseback in a courtyard, with the harassing accompaniments of gun-firing and discordant fanfares, such as the Sultan orders when in good heart.

Only the Eyebrow, or Chamberlain, the Grand Wazeer, and the usual more or less hidden circle of slaves were in attendance upon the Prophet's descendant when he first clapped eyes upon Messieurs

AT THE CITY GATES MARRAKISH

Smith and Jones, the former at ease in his elaborate if slightly archaic Spanish uniform, the latter dissembling his nervous eagerness, as one supposes he thought, by alternately scowling like a stage pirate and washing his hands in mid-air after the fashion set by retailers of inexpensive feminine attire.

His American Excellency, using the Moghrebin with colloquial fluency, greeted the Parasol, and stated the claim of the United States of America more listlessly than the average man orders soda-water at the breakfast-table.

His Shareefian Majesty, having tremulously taken snuff on the fork of his thumb, was understood to murmur graciously the wish that his illustrious visitor might attain great longevity. Regarding the inconsiderable trifle just mentioned, the Eyebrow explained with gusto that a messenger bearing with him the 120,000, in panniers, was even then on his way to the coast in search of his American Nobility.

Nobility smiled satirically and translated to his secretary. The secretary, throwing aside his earlier and linen-draping manner, assumed the mien of a mediæval executioner, and said, in a hoarse English whisper, "Tell him he's a liar, and show him his own letter. Remember what the commander told the Consul; it's the only way to treat these beggars."

Still smiling, "My scribe sayeth," murmured Smith to the Eyebrow, "that your Excellency is a liar. He also remindeth me of this thy letter, which reached me not at the coast, but on the road hither. In this is no mention of money save in the way of procrastination, the which I am bound to tell you my Government order me to respond to only from out the mouths of the great guns upon my ship."

Again his Shareefian Sublimity attempted to take snuff, but, as though to keep his sacred knees in countenance, the puissant right hand of Allah's Anointed trembled so violently that the precious stuff was all spilled 'twixt mother-o'-pearl tube and royal nose.

The Eyebrow ventured tentatively to bluster a little upon the personal point of honour. This was suppressed, however, by an impatient movement of the Sultan's. "A mistake has been made. Your Excellency shall receive the money by royal courier within the moon."

His Excellency translated, and, prompted by his secretary, replied, "The Sun and Moon of all the Faithful misunderstands us. Our instructions are urgent and definite. We set out for the coast to-morrow morning. The money must be paid over to us, in panniers, this afternoon, and an escort provided from his Shareefian Majesty's soldiers to guard us and the money on our way out of Marrakish. We go in any case. If with the money, in all peace and content; without it, the—"

The sacred snuffbox jerkily intervened. The Eyebrow bent his head to catch Majesty's murmurs. "The money will be paid and the escort provided this afternoon. Your Excellency has his Serene Majesty's gracious permission to take your leave of him, and he wishes that your Excellency may live," etc.

Smith carelessly voiced a hope with reference to Majesty's shadow, and the incident was closed, the audience terminated.

"A hundred and twenty thousand dollars in panniers this afternoon—to-day! Jee-wosh! What a gold-leaf, copper-bottomed miracle! A hundred—"

Thus Mr Secretary Jones to his uniformed commander in hoarse whispers and as they left the palace together.

"Yes. Seems all right. Thing worked fairly well, didn't it?" rejoined the commander.

"Worked fairly well? Great snakes! I wonder what you'd call a really first-rate scheme that worked very well. I don't think you've rightly got on to the thing. A hundred and—"

"Yes, yes; I know. But there's no need to make an anthem of it," said Smith, quietly.

"No need to— Smoke! And they make anthems in Europe when a king and queen get a son!" Jones's feelings were clear and emphatic enough if his speech was a little involved. His was indubitably the mind which had conceived the whole scheme. Upon his initiative entirely, and at each audacious turn, the thing had been carried through. Yet, in its out-working, the affair did, in Jones's eyes, so resemble a fairy-tale of the lived-happily-ever-after order, that the man trembled and was overcome by a dread of its all proving unreal before he could actually finger the prize.

The hours immediately following upon their audience at the palace formed a period in his life never to be forgotten by the man Jones. Wearied out at length by the outward and visible signs of his partner's distress, Smith left the perspiring wight alone in the guest-house, fretting and quaking in an agony of anxious impatience, and strolled out into the shaded courtyard to smoke and think.

A severe moralist might have disputed and objected to the enunciation of the fact, but it nevertheless was a fact, that this reprehensible, this criminal

expedition in which the pair were engaged had done Smith a world of good, and that both morally and mentally as well as physically. It is safe to assert, as a general rule, that to engage one's self in crime is not good for the soul. Yet, for truth's sweet sake, it must be repeated that his share in this buccaneering and fraudulent quest had infinitely purged the moral nature and heightened the mental stature of the man who had found suicide too much for him on the beach before the old ruined fort.

"Upon my soul!" he muttered to himself, "but this is a deuced discreditable business for my father's son to be engaged upon—a most infernally discreditable business. I know what I'll do if Allah permits us to scrape clear with—with the swag. I'll get right away to Australia or America, or—yes, gad! yes—to America, of course! And make a clean start, and let the Government have my share of this haul anonymously. Hang it, I've got to live with myself. One must keep moderately clean. Conscience money. I've seen the sort of thing in the Agony column of the *Times*. Gad! but I'll do it, too. As for Jones—poor old Jones! A most excellent chap in his way. He won't know his hands are dirty, and so, in a way, I suppose, they won't be. And it'll very likely make quite a worthy, rate-paying sort of citizen of Jones. It's all a matter of the point of view. I honestly believe he'd cut his hand off rather than rob an individual. Oh, Lord, here he comes, with his nail-biting sweat of nervousness!—Ah, Jones! Quite jolly out here in the shade, isn't it? I suppose our royal escort will be along presently."

Jones stared in wan amazement at his partner's

sang-froid. "As though it were a porter with our baggage!" he exclaimed.

"Well, it's no good grizzling. The thing's all right. Why, these must be our fellows sure enough!"

Into the courtyard then clattered two palace guards, mounted showily. Behind them a man led a string of five not overladen mules with iron-clamped boxes in their shwarries. Behind these again rode a Court official, and last came a single mounted guard.

The courtyard gates were closed, the shwarries were carried into the patio, and the rest of the afternoon was solemnly devoted to the counting out of one hundred and nineteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven big bright Moorish dollars. The odd thirteen, so characteristically on the right side for the palace, Commander Smith magnanimously forgave. The money was repacked securely, the palace official took his departure with laden purse, and the two Christians passed the night within easy reach of their prize and its guardians.

Not a hitch of any sort came to justify Jones's nervous foreboding. The little caravan was under way shortly after daylight, and the palace guards accompanied it a good day's march toward the coast. After their departure the adventurers distributed their bullion evenly amongst their bedding and provisions, and so approached Mogador bearing burdens apparently of the most commonplace description.

Twenty miles out from Mogador the party met another caravan, heading toward Marrakish. Traders, Smith called them, after a glance at the little line of hooded white figures and laden pack-

animals. The newcomers drew rein as they reached our adventurers—a common courtesy of the Open Road calling for no remark.

"The prosperity of the morning to you!" said Smith, carelessly enough, as the closely-hooded leader of the caravan ranged alongside him on a big blue stallion.

"Ah! Yes, one fancied it must be you two. Don't move, Smith; don't move, sir. Three of my followers are American seamen (though they mayn't look it in this rig) and trophy-holding marksmen. Present arms, men; and keep your eyes about you. Ah, Mr Jonah! It is Jonah, I think; or am I mixing names? You will be so good as to dismount, Mr Jonah. Smith, get down. We will camp here for an hour, just to see that the bullion for my Government is all shipshape. Bo'sun!" One of the hooded figures of the caravan slid smartly from his beast, cast his djellab, and came to the salute as upon Commander Hawkins's own quarterdeck—a trimly-uniformed petty officer of the United States Navy.

"Upon my word," resumed Commander Hawkins, the leader, "I am half inclined to think it all nonsense, this notion that one must wear Moorish dress in travelling here. You may take this garment, bo'sun, and just pitch my little tent—sharp as you like."

The commander had drawn off his all-cloaking djellab, and now displayed his fine figure in trim, warm weather mufti. The tent pitched: "Just see to our friend Mr Jonah, and—and the things, bo'sun. Mr Jonah, perhaps you will rest awhile with my men here; good, clean American sailormen every one, Mr

Jonah. No doubt you will find topics of mutual interest. Now, Smith, just step inside here with me, if you please. One finds serious conversation almost indecent in such a glare of sunlight." The commander motioned Smith to a camp-stool, and sat himself cross-legged upon another, facing it. "Now, first of all, have you the dollars with you, Smith?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes," replied Smith, somewhat gloomily but with composure.

"Ah! The whole lot, intact?"

"Thirteen short of the hundred and twenty thousand."

"Really! One is moved to compliment you, Smith. You really did remarkably well. One knows something of that Court and its methods. And now tell me, Smith, what in the name of simplicity induced you to allow your—er—your mission to become common native talk in Mogador?"

"That! Oh, Jones insisted on that as a means of letting rumour pave the way for us at Court."

"Ah! Mr Jonah is unfortunate in his influences. Did it not strike you that the same means might pave your way to—to this meeting after the other? One's crew is allowed ashore—in batches, you know. In that way the rumour naturally reached one in time. It was your scheme's weak point, this contribution of Mr Jonah's, don't you think?"

"Oh, as to that, I think his scheme was pretty sound for a simple-minded man. He is a singularly good-hearted, simple soul at bottom in spite of—though you find us—"

"Ah! one somehow guessed it. Then the whole scheme was Mr Jonah's. One could almost have

sworn it. You—er—made the acquaintance on bed-rock, so to say, Smith? Deep spoke to deep, eh—and that sort of thing?"

"He's a thoroughly good sort, really," said Smith, half in aggression and half pleadingly.

"H'm! Just so. Well, now, Smith, one does not want unnecessarily to humiliate white men, particularly before natives. There must be no attempt at—er—at leaving this party, if you please. We can look further into matters on board. In the meantime keep cool and go straightly, Smith. Never despair. One feels bound to say that one gave you a hint about the undesirable character of your partnership quite a while back, on board. However—now keep cool, Smith. We are both entitled to our own opinions about the wholesomeness for you of Mr Jonah's intimacy. Meantime, sir"—and here the commander's voice took on a sudden solemnity, a grave dignity very impressive to hear—"be thankful, be very thankful, that things are as they are, and you where you are. You are free now of that dirty load from the palace. It has reached its true destination and is in the right hands. Be you very thankful for that."

"Why, frankly, I have been since the moment I recognised you. I meant to make for your country, anyhow, and— However, that won't interest you."

His real thought was: "You won't believe that I meant to repay my share, so I won't bother telling you." But the commander was a far-seeing sailorman, shrewd, Bohemian, and with a temper of ripe and catholic benevolence.

Smith did presently reach America, and under his own name too—which brings one upon the heels

of quite another story. Under his own name, Smith was Commander Hawkins's private secretary. And Jones, the last I heard of simple-minded Jones, was that he had shipped from 'Frisco as mate of an island brig bound for Honolulu.

UNDER THE RED FLAG

ALL men cannot be courtiers, even in "The Land of the Afternoon," and, of course, there are some powers in the country outside the neighbourhood of the Exalted Presence. There are, firstly, the provincial governors who purchase their posts from the Minister of the Interior, or, in a few cases, are appointed by our Lord himself, by way of reward for services rendered, for rare presents given, or, in the case of a man of Shareefian blood or a possible rival, as a dismissal from Court. In the interior these governors inhabit great ksor, or castles, which are really small villages enclosed by a fortified wall, and built about the central residence of the governor himself. In his own district the power of one of these governors is supreme, maintained by his own soldiers, and sufficiently demonstrated by punishment in his own prison for who should doubt it. At intervals a governor is supposed to journey to Court to make his obeisances to the Presence, and to hand over tribute from his province to the Sultan's treasury, besides presents to his Lord and to the watchful army of Court idlers. If such visits are not sufficiently frequent or profitable to the Sultan, the backward governor is invited to attend without delay. If, in response to such an invitation, he brings but a light token of his fealty, his visit ends in a dungeon, troops are sent to ransack his kasbah for treasure, and within a day or so his post, his

residence, his women, chattels and gleanings of every sort and kind are sold, practically to the highest bidder, probably to some trusted former adherent who has managed to accumulate gear during his reign, and, having heard of his superior's summons to Court, has journeyed thither himself with full hands and well-laden pack animals.

The present writer knows one intelligent Moor who has twice occupied the position of a lesser monarch in this way, ruling a countryside as absolute autocrat thereof, and who at this moment is pleased if he find bread twice a day and a blanket for chilly nights in the reeking dungeon which he shares with a score and more of other chained unfortunates. His crime was that "Father" Ahmad, the late iron-handed Wazeer el Kabeer and Regent, considered that his yield of tribute to the State coffers was a good deal less than might have been squeezed out of his district. So Ba Ahmad invited my friend to Court, and, being a temperate man and always averse to any unnecessary taking of life, did not follow the quite ordinary custom of handing the governor corrosive sublimate in his tea, but merely threw him into an underground granary and had him industriously flogged, with a view to extorting information regarding hidden treasure. The governor, whether from innocence or obstinacy, kept a stiff upper lip, and took his daily meed of punishment without comment.

Presently, "Father" Ahmad being a practical, if not a merciful, man, the floggings ceased, and when the month of Ramadan was well passed, and the mire of the tracks dried, his Shareefian Majesty's troops, directed by Ba Ahmad, proceeded to "eat up" my friend's district, among others, in the course of the

usual spring forays for taxes. This "eating up" is a temperate phrase enough, and annually justified by fact. The Shareefian troops do leave little more in a countryside which they have thrashed for taxes than a swarm of locusts would leave in a bed of mint upon which they had called a noon-day halt. Their most approved method of settling a question as to the existence of hidden treasure in a village is to capture the inhabitants, lop off the heads of the men, for pickling and spiking upon the gates of their Lord's capitals, preserve the young women, burn the village to the ground, dig up its foundations, in case of buried money, and leave no living thing where that village stood, beyond its scavengers, the pariah dogs. To ride through a recently-chastised district in the wake of the Sultan's army is to journey with a sore heart, and, unless one goes well laden, with empty bellies for man and beast. But these visitations do not spell revolution, or civil war, or anything at all like it. They were written, they come when and as Allah permits, and there's an end of it. Fatalism is talked of in Europe. It is only in the world of Islam that it is understood, felt and lived. With us of paler Christendom it is an article of faith that the meek are blessed for that "they shall inherit the earth"; that they who mourn or are poor in spirit, and persecuted, are also blessed; also that no sparrow may fall from a housetop without the cognisance of God the Father and Comforter. These beliefs are a part of religion in Europe. They, and others like them, are the basis of life in Morocco. Christians extol the enduring faith of Job. Mohammedans imitate and equal it in daily life. We of Christendom profess to hold earthly treasures baubles, and wear out our lives, and the

lives of others whom we retain to help us, in the search for such treasure, and in its accumulation. The sorriest beggar in all Morocco, the most ignorant dolt in the Soudan, proves by his life, and often by his death, that our empty profession is his living belief. And his philosophy of fatalism, if rooted, as Westerners are wont to affirm, in laziness and indifference (it is really rooted in the fact that his religion is actual, real and literally genuine to him), is dignified and marvellously enduring.

"It seems the pesky thing *will* wash, anyway!" said a well-known American, speaking of the same philosophy after watching a chained file of prisoners squatting on their ham-bones in pitiless sun glare in the Sôk, or market-place, at Mogador. They were starved and chain-galled, these men, with bruised bodies and blood-encrusted feet. Four of their number had died on the march, their dead heads having then been cut off that their bodies might clear the connecting chain. Their crime was that their kaïd had not paid sufficient tribute to the Sultan. Now, as they squatted in the shadeless market-place, a passer-by occasionally gave one a dish of water that he might moisten his parched throat and blackened lips withal. The man so relieved would murmur a "God be with thee." Not a single murmur could be heard among his unrelieved fellows, who calmly, impassively stared straight before them, or answered evenly enough the casual remark of a bystander, smoked if the wherewithal were given them, or failing this were as sedately reflective and dignified without. Their religion and the fatalistic philosophy born of it were not mere professions with these men.

I well remember, during an early visit to Morocco,

making a short journey with a Moor of repute and standing in his own town. At night we were entertained by a village sheikh, a friend of my companion's, and a man who interested me greatly.

"How did you come to know Sheikh Mohamet?" I asked my companion as we jogged out of the village in the dawning next day.

"Oh, I met him in prison some years ago—Tetuan prison it was. He was a stranger there and his people had not reached Tetuan. And so he had no food or blankets. He shared mine, and—we became friends."

The matter of course nonchalance of it all! Imagine yourself asking an equal, a fellow clubman, a similar question, and receiving as answer: "Oh, Robinson? I met him in gaol. We were at Wormwood Scrubbs together." And Robinson the mayor of his town, remember. In this connection I must set down here the yarn of an English friend of mine and his friend, Sheikh Abd el Majeed. I give it as my friend gave it me.

MY FRIEND THE SHEIKH

YOU will understand, of course, that I was no stranger to Morocco at the time of the story. A new arrival in Sunset Land is necessarily blind to much that goes on in that singular survival of patriarchal days which lies within sight of southern Europe. And he must walk warily if he would keep a whole skin and live to walk elsewhere.

I was camping at the foot of Ain Sfroo during a very leisurely pilgrimage from the interior toward Tangier; beautiful sea-girt Tangier, where the English and other infidels do congregate; "the city given over to dogs, and the spawn of dogs," as Believers pleasantly put it. My head man, Boaz (a jewel for a journey), had hit upon an ideal spot for our little camp. Behind us the jagged peaks of the Ain Sfroo soared and towered into the sky-line. Before my own tent a gnarled old olive, cruddled and bowed like an eighty-year-old field labourer at home, gave me pleasing shelter. Close beside my servants' tent ran a little brook of merry, brown mountain water; and all round and about us the foot-hills met the plain in a stretch of verdure, so clear and pleasant to the eye that one fancied it had been a bowling-green of the gods; of some sportive community of Djinnoon, let us say.

I fancy I had dozed for a few moments (I had taken no siesta that day, and we had ridden, albeit in leisurely style, since dawn) when the sound of strange

voices, and the clean, quick footsteps of mules roused me, and I saw that a party of strangers were about to pitch their camp for the night within a hundred yards of where I lay, attracted no doubt by the beauty and fitness of the spot for that purpose.

"Who comes?" said I, lazily, to Boaz, who was stewing a chicken for me over a charcoal brazier. Boaz had evidently taken stock of the newcomers and already exhausted his interest in them, for he replied languidly,—

"Four Âssáseen" (Guards), "and one who is already twice dead—and buried."

I thought this good enough to sit up for, and I noticed then that in the midst of the four mounted men—two rode mules, pack-laden, and two were on gaunt horses, with high scarlet-peaked saddles —was one afoot, his wrists bound with palmetto cord to the stirrups of a rider upon either side.

"What then?" said I to Boaz. "Who is the 'dead man'?"

"It is Sheikh Abd el Majeed" (Sheikh Slave of the Glorious, that is) "of Tazigah; not for long a Sheikh, b'Allah, since it is but three moons since his father died—May God have forgiven him!—and now —now you see him!"

I was interested. I had known city-gate beggars in Morocco who had been Bashas or Governors of the towns they begged in. Also, I had known a water-pedlar who became a great Wazeer and ended his days, after enjoying great power and riches, in a particularly noisome dungeon in Marrakish. So this captive at the soldiers' stirrups was the young Sheikh of Tazigah. I had been in Tazigah, disguised as a Moorish woman of the peasant class (I confess to

some pride in the statement, which perhaps two other Nazarenes might truthfully make), and knew something of the queer savage border-land town it was. You see the Kaid of the Ain Sfroo province is the nominal ruler of the whole of the Ain Sfroo, and, as a fact, does rule and extort taxes right up to the very outskirts of this same town of Tazigah. Into the town itself his myrmidons have not yet pierced. Beyond it, men laugh at Basha, Kaid and Sultan alike, never having paid a tax, save to their own brigands, and holding that the gun, the knife, and the strong right arms of mountain-bred men are in themselves the law and its administration and its penalties. Stern, hardy, free men are they; and the Tazigs of Tazigah, they claim the same sort of immunity. But their claim is not, as with that of the mountaineers beyond, undisputed. Tazigah is on the border-line. But for the young Sheikh of Tazigah to be bound to the stirrups of rascals of the Kaid's guard — this was woeful, I thought.

"They must surely have caught him outside the town?" I said to Boaz.

"Ay, at the house of that crawling son of the illegitimate Hamed Fâsi, I believe," replied Boaz, turning the chicken in the stew-pan. "But, b'Allah, Tazigah of to-day is not the Tazigah of my day or the worms would be eating those same guards by now. But now, you will see, Tazigah will become as a village of the plain, and Kaid Achmet—may he ride ever a little more uneasily, till his bones rot!—will gather his taxes there, as he might in the salted place of the Jews."

I was not in a position to contradict this prophecy, so called for the bread and the tea-pot, and settled

down to the discussion of a somewhat elderly but admirably-cooked chicken, while Boaz and his comrades courted surfeit upon some three-year-old meat, preserved in rancid butter, and some fritters which seemed to possess all the properties of oil-skin, or very thick waterproofing material of some sort.

Dinner ended, I lit a cigarette, and bade Boaz convey to the neighbouring guides, with my salaams, some tea and sugar, and a certain tin of sweet biscuits of a sort that no Moor I had ever met could resist. Word of the guards' gratification being duly brought to me, I allowed a decent interval to elapse, and then, followed by Boaz and his two assistants, strolled down the slope to the tent of the soldiers and their captive. The idea of the pinioned young Sheikh possessed me.

"Peace be upon ye, O Believers! What news of ye? Nothing wrong with ye?" And so forth, according to custom, I showered the usual salutations upon the four brigands (for Kaid's guards all through Morocco are nothing better than brigands), received their orthodox responses, and was bidden welcome. A place of honour was cleared for me upon a ragged carpet before the tent-pole, and some of my own tea was poured out for my delectation, in a little blue, gold and crimson mug, such as I have seen children in England place before their dolls. A sprouting head of mint was in the pear-shaped metal tea-pot, and one drank a spoonful of sugar to two of the decoction, making hideous noises with one's lips the while, and gasping after a drink as though choking from delighted surfeit. This if one would be truly courteous.

Opposite the tent-pole, on the side farthest from

the entrance, I saw lying Sheikh Abd el Majeed. The young man was stretched upon his right side, his wrists bound behind him to a stake at the edge of the tent, and his ankles bound together with palmetto cord. In his eyes one read something of the dignified philosophy with which all Mussulmans the world over meet misfortune, and a good deal of haughty contempt for the persons and methods of those who had brought him low; and at the back of all else one saw something of the indescribable horror and loathing which the semi-savage feels for the state of captivity. Bill Sykes probably does not like a cell at Holloway; but I fancy it must be less objectionable to him than an eighteen-penny cage to a skylark, or pinioned captivity to a Tazigah Moor. And Abd el Majeed was born a chief, you will remember.

I gave him sympathetic greeting with my eyes, as far as I could make those organs express my feelings; and I thought he understood, and returned me a not ungrateful glance from his own heavily-fringed big eyes, which in that light appeared as black as sloes, and far more glossy. Speaking then as one entirely without information on the subject, I ventured upon inquiries regarding the prisoner. The chief of the soldiers answered me with unhesitating candour, and as though the prisoner himself, being already a corpse, had no longer hearing or any other sense to be offended.

"Ihyeh; that's the young Sheikh o' Tazigah; and him the Kaid has desired to entertain these many moons. His body should mean dollars in our pockets, sure enough; and without doubt the trick by which we won it deserves good pay. We got Hamed Fâsi to send him word of a horse no man could bestride,

by token that the beast could kick a house from off his back, and if the house could have been builded there. Now, as all men know, the vanity of the Sheikh was that mare never dropped the foal he could not handle, and ride, and cow withal. The Sheikh came down from Tazigah, as if to his wedding, and crafty Hamed had him soon astride my chestnut there, a heavy-headed, peaceful beast, that would not kick a snapping dog, but will go down on his knees when I tell him, like any camel. 'Down, Daddy Big-head,' I shouts from my place behind Hamed's cow-shed. And in a moment the four of us were upon the Sheikh, while crafty Hamed picks up the gun the young man had propped against the house-front. Oh, 'twas undoubtedly a brilliant to-do; it should make a song in Ain Sfroo for many a day. And so there lies the body o' him, and the Kaid's dollars as good as in our pockets. And mind you, he was no weakling in his life, but a mighty muscular young man, the Sheikh o' Tazigah. A great capture, truly! But these be mere trifles in a soldier's life."

It was rather uncanny, I thought, this use of the past tense in speaking of the young man who lay listening, with his great eyes smouldering in the dusk of the tent. But, to be sure, he had fatalism to support him, the hardy philosophy of his blood and breeding, and his belief in a very luscious Paradise for all young Sheikhs who were true believers. Still, it must have been a leek to eat for a gallant young man, and well I knew that the cords that bound him must be a suffocating torment to Abd el Majeed. Moreover, there was a large grey mosquito upon the bridge of his nose, and a drop of perspiration trickling to the corner of one eye.

"And what might be the trouble, then?" I asked. "What thing hath given an edge to your Kaid's desire to entertain the Sheikh?"

"Ihyeh, 'tis a double edge, Sidi; a blade to cut bone as well as body. The Sheikh is twice dead, as all here know."

"Ay, so Boaz hath told me," said I, forgetting my assumption of ignorance in the matter. "But the forging of the blade—what led to it, O brave soldier?"

"Why, Sidi, that is surely plain to all men? First, the Kaid desireth taxes from Tazigah, and so would have its Sheikh by the heels, and place one of his own people in that place; and second, who is to marry the Kaid's daughter now?"

I started at this. "Why, Allah alone knoweth, friend," said I. "But what is that to the Sheikh?"

"Sidi, thy life has surely been led in some far place. The Sheikh, in his life, was married to our Kaid's daughter. 'Twas thought the thing would bring Tazigah properly under our master's rule. And on the morning after his wedding, what did the Sheikh do but turn his wife away with a paper of divorce, for all the world to see; the woman and her bridal gear, foot and pack, he sent them all bundling down the hillside to her father's castle again. And there she hath remained, a catch for who would marry a great Kaid's daughter—with a record. What keener edge would ye have for our Kaid's desire to entertain the Sheikh?"

I nodded. The young Sheikh was in sober truth "twice dead," I thought. And if you are curious regarding the Muslim view of such things, let me commend to your notice the 24th and 22nd chapters of Deuteronomy. The Mohammedan

rule is based upon the Jewish, but is milder. Prompt divorce suffices without stoning. But in the case of a powerful Kaid's daughter—"Y'Allah t'if!" I thought. "The Sheikh is indeed very dead!" And then, turning my eyes upon his recumbent figure (there is something which stirs the heart strangely in the sight of a man lying bound hand and foot, like a brute prepared for slaughter; it is his utter helplessness, I fancy, that moves one's bowels of compassion), I was startled to note a light of unmistakable appeal in the black eyes as they met mine. It seemed Abd el Majeed must have read my thoughts, and his eyes seemed to say, "Nay, not dead, but maybe dying for lack of the helping hand of some true man!"

Almost involuntarily, and certainly without pause for thought or consideration of the difficulties involved, I returned the captive's look with a distinct affirmative, a glance which I well knew said plainly to him, "I will give that helping hand; watch thou for me!"

It was a reckless promise, but, having made it, it was incumbent upon me to use my best endeavours to redeem it. Up to that moment I had not given one fleeting thought to the matter of the prisoner's possible escape. I had merely felt regret for his poor case; regret for the tragedy of things Moorish, the inevitable tyranny, oppression and suffering of this most mysterious and romantic of the old-world realms. But for any attempt at rescue—well, if a Nazarene sets himself to remedy the lot of every unjustly-oppressed wight he comes upon in the Land of the Setting Sun, he needs more than the wealth of the Indies at his back, the enduring strength of an elephant, the patience of Job, and the sort of philosophy which makes a man impervious to the basest

WHERE THE BASHA OF TANGIER HOLDS HIS COURT

sort of ingratitude or treachery. And, with all this, he may look to succeed in unsettling a few score of people, and temporarily improving the lot of one in ten thousand—if he live long enough.

But I had passed my word, though no word had passed my lips.

The syrupy, mint-scented tea was exhausted, so, in rising to leave my hosts, I promised to send them a further supply; and was informed that, for an unbeliever, I was really a most excellent and redoubtable person, of very respectable origin and goodly bearing. I predicted glory, riches, and a sumptuous pavilion in Paradise for my hosts, each and severally, and with pious wishes for their well-being in both worlds took my departure, followed by my trusty Boaz.

On the way back to my tent ideas jostled one another in my mind, and I am bound to say that none of them were of much account.

"Now, if only I had some sort of a sleeping-draught to give them, in place of this tea, that might advance our case a little," I thought, as I scooped some tea into a tin for Boaz to carry to the guards. But my medicine chest was small; quinine, calomel, and two tiny bottles half-full of chlorodyne being all that I possessed in the way of drugs. "Well, well; better half a loaf than no bread," I muttered. "Bring the teapot, Boaz." He brought our large pot and we made a strong brew of tea. Into this I emptied my two half bottles of chlorodyne, wondering the while what the estimable inventor of that soothing drug would have thought of my dispensing. I remembered that the stuff had given me sleep more than once in cases of mild but painful dysentery.

"Boaz!" I growled, with sudden sternness, "you

have some hasheesh in your pouch. Now, don't deny it!" I had endeavoured, unsuccessfully, of course, to wean the man from the use of the drug. He confessed somewhat sulkily. "Well, then, go thou and ply the guards with it—every particle of it. And give them this tea. But drink none of it yourself, and take no hasheesh, for I have work afoot to-night."

I rather think Boaz saw my game then, for there was a leer in his eye as he walked off to do my bidding. But I thought I would reserve my confidence until he had accomplished this first stage of my plan. I was uncertain what his attitude might be. He had his own skin to consider, of course, and the arm of the Kaid of Ain Sfroo was notoriously long, as his wrath was consuming and ill to meet. I smoked quietly for half an hour, and listened to the murmurs of good fellowship which reached me from the guards' tent. The mosquitoes were exceptionally lively that evening, and I thought, as I brushed them from my forehead, of Abd el Majeed, the "dead" Sheikh.

"Poor devil!" I muttered. "The very next caged bird I see shall have the door of its prison opened if I can get near it."

"The heads of mud began to snore before they had time to lie down," said Boaz, when, after about forty minutes, he returned and squatted down beside me. "What work is afoot?"

Boaz was growing elderly, but, like every other Arab who ever cried me "Peace!" his appetite for strife and adventure was keen as a lad's.

"Boaz," said I; "a Sheikh of the hills is as good a man as any Kaid of the plains!"

"As any six of the plains," agreed Boaz, promptly.

I knew, of course, that himself was of Sheshawanee, a hill-man to the last drop of blood in his veins.

"Think ye that the Âssáseen will sleep soundly, Boaz?" was my next question.

"Not so soundly as they might if their stomachs tasted a mountain man's steel," answered Boaz, fingering the point of his dagger's sheath; "but pigs and guards of the plains sleep ever more heavily than true men; and when they wake—phaa! Thou hast seen how pigs are speared on the plain beyond Spartel!"

I had, and had even enjoyed a little sport with the lance myself; but I wanted no sticking done that night. After all, Kaids and their guards are Kaids and their guards; and consuls in coast towns are not always upon the side of the adventurous of their colour.

"Two of them have mules, Boaz," said I, "and so do not count. The two that have horses—"

"Phaa! Thy horse, Sidi, would leave them standing like trees; pass them, and leave them, as the wind passes a house."

"Ah! That is as I thought. And the city of Al Ksar el Kebeer, Boaz, it is well beyond the line of Kaid Achmet's authority—no?"

"Ay, by two days' march."

"Good! Then you will make my horse ready for the road, good Boaz. Then bring me my Winchester, and we will see further."

The horse and the gun were duly brought, and together we crept down toward the tent of the Kaid's guards. We could hear them snoring from a hundred yards distant. Fifty paces from the tent I paused.

"You know exactly where the Sheikh lies, Boaz?"

"As I know my father's house in Sheshawan."

"Go there, on thy belly, cut the Sheikh clear, and bring him to me."

"I go."

I might have chosen this part of the affair myself, you think, since undoubtedly there was danger in it? Well, yes; but then, you see, I knew my man. Had I done this, and left Boaz as onlooker beside my horse, he would afterwards have despised me for a fool; and as he was a very useful servant for travelling work in Morocco, I could not afford to face that contingency. Besides, my favourite Winchester rifle was in my hand, and I knew that, with absolute certainty, I could drop the first man who was foolish enough to attack Boaz; or the first half-dozen, for that matter, though I had no notion of doing so if I could avoid it. No; you must think what you please of it, but in the presence of my servants I could not afford to do myself what Boaz was doing at this moment.

Like a great lizard in the grass he slithered down the slope to where a slight bulge in the side of the tent told me the Sheikh lay. Arrived within the shadow of the tent, Boaz lay still for a few moments. Then (as I afterwards learned) he murmured, very low, "Bal-ak!" Which is to say—"Thy mind!" or "Attention!" Then, getting by way of response a slight movement from the recumbent figure within, Boaz very delicately slit the hanging lower edge of the tent by the Sheikh's head. In a moment the Sheikh's bound wrists faced him in the moonlight through the opening he had made. Boaz's dagger made short work of the wrist fastenings, and was then

slipped into the Sheikh's outstretched right hand, for him to work his will upon the cord that held his feet.

Two minutes later and the Sheikh crawled out upon the grass beside Boaz. Together they pressed a sod down upon the severed edges of the tent flap, and three minutes more brought them to my side. The Sheikh caught my right hand in both his own, and I felt his moustache brush my knuckles. It was not as embarrassing to me as it had been when I was new to the East and its ways.

"Nay, 'tis nothing, Sheikh," I told him. "Mount thou the horse here, and get thee to Al Ksar. Give this card to the English Consul there, and bide ye within his gates—without fail, within his gates—till I come."

It was not the time for conversation. His beard brushed my hand again, and without a sound he swung into the saddle, walking my horse gingerly to win clear of earshot, past which I knew he would try the beast's paces well enough, in the course of, say, three and a half days of hard riding. There are no telegraph wires, police-stations, railways, turnpikes, or anything of that sort in Sunset Land, and the heads of provinces have no extradition treaties one with another. Even in actual warfare the bloody quarrels of one village are ignored utterly by soldiers and civilians alike in a village half-a-dozen miles distant. In the course of time, if Sheikh Abd el Majeed chose to abide in one place, some gossip from that place who happened to pass through the Kaid Achmet's domain would mention the circumstance. Then, if the Sheikh were worth it, the Kaid might offer his colleague, who ruled in the place the Sheikh had

chosen to rest in, a share of the plunder if he would yield up the Sheikh's body. That Kaid would then approach the Sheikh and endeavour to bleed him privately. If the Sheikh bled satisfactorily, well and good. If he did not, and was suspected of possessing treasure somewhere, he might be seized and sent a prisoner to the first Kaid; but—enough has been said to show you that personal freedom is the main thing. "Put me upon a good horse with a gun in my hand, and you give me the key of the world and a passport to Paradise," says your Moor. And, in Sunset Land, he is in the right of it.

Boaz and myself, we went quietly to bed.

In the morning I woke early and smacked my lips. I had a zestful appetite for the new day. The discomfiture of our acquaintances is apt to be even more pleasing to us than the misfortunes of our friends. I thought of the probably still snoring guards, and I chuckled, and rolled a morning cigarette. I shouted to Boaz to make the tea, and was comfortably partaking of that beverage when the first awakening shout of the Kaid's guards smote upon my ears, like the overture to a comic opera.

Abdullah, the one-eyed captain of the guard—the same garrulous rascal who had been spokesman during my visit to the tent—came plunging up the slope, still drowsy, very much bewildered, and as wrathful as a bull on a hornet's nest. As a modest story-teller I would scorn to translate for you the mildest of the expressions which he expelled from him at intervals, as an engine getting under way expels steam. Interspersed among them I caught various not very respectful references to "Nazarenes" (the Christianity of a European is taken as a matter

of course in Morocco, where national and other fine distinctions count for nothing), and I entertained no doubt but that he had his suspicions of the true state of the case. But suspicions without proof are not much to go upon in any event; and as between a travelling Englishman and a soldier of the guard of a provincial Moorish Kaid they are less than nothing. I begged the one-eyed man to let me hear details of his trouble, and proffered him refreshment to sustain him in the telling withal. The good tea he waved from him, so to say, and proceeded, his face empurpling as he went, to pour abuse upon poor Boaz.

The next act in the opera showed me one-eyed Abdullah flying bellowing down the green slope toward his own tent, followed closely by Boaz, who was thrashing him with a shwarri-rope as he ran, and cursing him for the fatherless jackal of a mangy Kaid, lacking the valour required to guard in safety a man tied hand and foot. I called Boaz to heel as soon as I could stop laughing, and we made preparations to strike camp. The guards went without breaking their fast, and the last glimpse I had of them showed them ambling hurriedly along the road to Tazigah, upon which it may be they hoped to overtake the Sheikh. As I knew the Sheikh must be cantering in a quite opposite direction, the picture did not disturb me; and for the next few days I made myself comfortable, perched like a Turk atop of one of the packs carried by a smooth-stepping mule, a really very restful method of progress if a shade less dignified than the ordinary. The pack beneath me was as broad as a small dining-table, and much softer; the mule knew his business better than I did, and required

no guidance. I was no loser by the absence of my horse; though of that animal itself the same could probably not have been said.

I found the Sheikh in the English Consul's fandak at Al Ksar, with my horse. It seemed his feeling for me was still informed by a lively sense of gratitude, and when he heard that I was for Tangier, the Sheikh announced, in the most matter-of-course way, his intention of accompanying me. As it happened, I was further bound for England, home and creditors at the time; and so, I thought, the Sheikh and myself would very soon be parting company in any case. But imperious Chance, who guides the feet of fools, and others, was minded otherwise, or these lines had never been written.

I spent four days in infidel-afflicted Tangier, during which time the Sheikh hovered about me in a half-paternal, half-dependent manner which the veriest boor had found it hard to resent, assisting me in the task of getting together my various belongings, and—as I discovered very much to my astonishment upon my last night in Tangier—sleeping upon the mat at my bedroom door. Next morning I waited until the little steamer which was to convey me to Gibraltar had gotten up her steam and was ready for departure, and then sallied forth to the Custom-house, followed by the Sheikh, Boaz, and a line of laden donkeys.

My baggage had all passed the drowsy eyes of the gorgeous magnates who sit in the place of fraud and peculation at Tangier, or I thought so, and a man came running to inform me that I had not a moment to spare if I was to catch the boat. Then an elderly dignitary in robes of orange and violet awoke abruptly from his doze and ordered a couple of porters to open

a packing-case of books and curios and other oddments, which up till that moment I had overlooked. I made my salaams to the dignitary and assured him that the contents of the case were worthless. He waved me from him, as I had been a puff of cigarette smoke. The case was opened and my poor treasures scattered far and wide.

"The Nazarene must wait till another day; these matters must be looked into carefully," murmured the dignitary, with the air of one who felt that for him to speak at all was an act of ineffable condescension.

I strayed from the path of wisdom and spoke sharply; not abusively, you understand, but brusquely, and with reference to the catching of a boat in Gibraltar. It was more than enough to damn my case, it seemed. It may be the dignitary had taken an over-dose of the shameful (kief-smoke) on the previous evening. At all events he turned his head aside languidly and muttered something to a colleague about the illegitimacy and pig-like nature of Christians in general, and of myself in particular. Unfortunately the Sheikh, who stood beside me, caught the words.

"Dog, and thrice-damned son of a dog!" he bellowed. And, as he bounded forward, I saw his eighteen-inch curved dagger flash out from its scabbard. A long, heavy table separated the officials from ourselves, the herd. I sprang at the Sheikh's fluttering garments to hold him back. A dozen porters leaped in his way as he growled out another withering curse upon the progeny and the ancestry of the portly administrator behind the table.

"Hold that pig's son!" spluttered the official. A colleague leaned over and whispered to him. "The

Kaid of Ain Sfroo will pay a hundred dollars for that dog's body. Hold him!" he yelled.

There was not much time for thought. I could not afford to lose my boat. It was certain death for the Sheikh to be left behind; that I well knew, for who may oppose a Customs Administrator in the port of Tangier? None of them would dare to lay hand upon me.

"Come!" I whispered, behind the Sheikh. "Run with me for your life!" Trust in me and, I think, obedience to me had become an instinct with this man. He turned on the instant, and together we raced down the pier to where a small boat lay piled high with my baggage. We were followed hotly by at least fifty Moors. Down the steps we cluttered, after upsetting the elderly official who wished to collect toll from us at the pier-head. We had no time for paying toll.

"Out oars and pull for your life!" I shouted to the boatmen. "Five dollars for you if you catch the steamer!"

I could hear the cable creaking in the rusty hawse-pipe of the little steamer. The skipper was an old friend of mine.

"Get under way, Cap'en!" said I, the moment we touched the steamer's deck. "The boat's moored alongside. They'll be able to pick up my baggage all right."

And he did it like a Briton; and the small flotilla that had put out after us was a good mile astern when my last bag was thrown aboard. I gave those boatmen seven dollars; and they could and would plead ignorance of the whole business when they returned to the shore and the Custom-house.

BELOW THE SALT

PROGRESSING downward from those castle-dwelling feudal lords of Morocco, the governors of provinces, one finds every city with its Basha (from the Turkish *bash ághá*, or chief administrator), who is assisted by a lieutenant (khaleefa), who, again, looks to four m'kaddams, or foremen, one of whom is responsible for the supervision of each quarter of the town. The Basha holds open court each day, from six or seven till nine or ten o'clock in the morning, and from three to six afternoon, with a Sabbath half-holiday on Fridays. His court may be held in the city kasbah, or under an awning before his door, or, as I have seen it in sundry lesser towns, in a miry stableyard. In either case, the Basha sits or reclines upon cushions, a taleb or scribe near by, and the propitiating gifts of litigants, from a loaf of sugar or a packet of candles to a bag of dollars, ranged suggestively behind him. A few of his soldiers (generally the most unashamed rascals in the town) are always within hail, for, in the midst of a heated argument, or when presents come in but poorly, the Basha is apt to order a general thwacking to be administered on the spot, or to bundle everyone concerned in the case before him off to prison, there to cool their heels and minds, and reflect upon the evils of litigiousness.

No record is ever kept of punishments adminis-

tered, and the judge rarely mentions any term in ordering a man to prison. His power is absolute and unquestioned, in all penalties save that of death, for which the Sultan's order has to be obtained. The Basha deals with all important cases in which bribing upon anything like a large scale will be involved; whilst petty cases, street troubles and the like, in which defendants and plaintiffs are not expected to make presents of many shillings in value, come before the Khaleefa's court. This is an even less ceremonious temple of injustice than the Basha's court, but its hours and methods are very similar. From careful observation in the courts of various Khaleefas, I have come to believe that the scales are held evenly enough, to this extent, that accused and accuser, plaintiff and defendant, occupy much the same positions, and run much the same risks in an average case tried before Basha or Khaleefa. The presents from both sides being equal in value, the plaintiff is at least as likely to go to gaol as is his opponent, and an even more probable contingency is that the pair of them will be bundled off together. Now, the suggestion thus conveyed, the moral urged is excellent: don't go to law; and it is needed, for all Orientals are given over much to litigation.

Seriously considered, however, one is bound to admit that the Moorish courts are veritable sinks of chicanery, corruption and venal paltering with the country's curse of palm oil. When a Moor really desires justice in a vital matter, vengeance upon a murderer, or an adulterer, he sharpens his dagger, primes his flint-lock, invokes God's blessing upon his errand, and sets out to combine the offices of judge and executioner in his own person by slaying the

offender. His right to do this is recognised; indeed, such a course is expected of him, though the acceptance of blood-money is allowed at times to wipe out a blood feud.

In every town there is one other court of a more formal sort, wherein a more life-like simulacrum of justice obtains, and wakels or attorneys ply their vexatious craft. This is the Kadi's court, and the Kadi is by way of being a law lord and registrar-general rather than a criminal judge; he is a more or less ecclesiastical civilian, and not a kaid, or militant power. Here all documents are drawn up by âdul, or notaries; there is a Kadi's fee attaching to every seal and signature, and the traffic in "presents" is comparatively inconsiderable, and not open. A Kadi may not send a man to prison for more than three days without providing a written statement of his offence and sentence. He may not order fetters, flogging or torture, and his decisions must always be written. This is the theory. As a fact, any man of standing may have an unprotected Moor imprisoned for almost any length of time, or beaten, within safe limits, by means of communicating his desire, with material compliments, to the Basha.

"I sent that rascal up to the kasbah to be flogged this morning. He had been tampering with . . . again."

That is a remark which the present writer has heard more than once upon the lips of European residents in Moorish ports. There is a European consul in Morocco to-day who had his Moorish servant well beaten, and kept (on the raw edge of starvation) in prison for exactly one year, as punishment for having plucked and eaten a ripe pear grow-

ing in an uncultivated garden that belonged to the consul. In this case the whole and sole ceremony of evidence, trial, sentence and the rest was crowded into one three-line note from Christian Consul to Muslim Basha:—"Oblige me by" doing this thing; and it was done.

In my diary of an early visit to Tangier I find quite a good deal of space devoted to the matter of Bashas' courts and so forth. Perhaps I took Oriental venality a little too seriously at that time. But the entry is descriptive, and it shall be given here for that reason.

THE PALM OIL CURSE

I FIND that the presence of a Nazarene, particularly one of my kidney (known here as a "scribe and a maker of devil business in books"), is apt to hamper the progress of injustice in the Khaleefa's court. I found his worship inclined to look in my direction and then to temper glaring roguery and tyranny with slow, benevolent smiles of Oriental suavity. At first I liked to think that in this place my presence served to temper injustice to the shorn, gaunt wretches who figured at the court. A little inquiry and observation robbed me of this soothing unction. The event, I found, was quite unaltered. All the change I brought was a very slight glozing, a little courteous veiling of the surface corruption. And this was by no means what I wanted.

So I took Abd es Selam into my confidence, not for the first time. I sauntered in the locality like an anxious litigant; Selam looked into court and listened, with sleepy, careless eyes. I received my reports toward tiffin-time, when the Khaleefa retired for his siesta. There was a marked sameness, a quite tiresome monotony, about this morning's cases. This I noticed. Seven cases were of the order in which one man lays a complaint against another. Four out of the seven ended in the complainant being dragged off to prison, whilst the defendant stalked

abroad, a free and most complaisant man. In those four cases complainant had prefaced his plaint by a small present of groceries. Defendant, on the other hand, in each of these four cases, had laid coin of the realm, in a paper, at the Khaleefa's feet. Food is cheap here. His worship prefers coin.

Lack of space hampers me, but one specimen case I must tell of here.

Mohamet, a Tangier Moor, appeared in the Khaleefate and complained that Cassim, Riffi, had man-handled him in the open market. Mohamet desired that Cassim might be beaten in the kasbah for this. At the same time he placed four packets of candles and three dollars, a very respectable gift, on a mat beside the Khaleefa. His worship grunted affably and sent two soldiers for Cassim. Mohamet waited to watch events. A man of experience is Mohamet. Cassim presently appeared, a splendid specimen of a mountain man, with wild eyes which he kept downcast. And that was the loss of him; for, even in Mohamet's presence, his eyes might have telegraphed the Khaleefa promise of a bribe. This is quite a customary method. However, Cassim obstinately eyed the floor. Seeing, therefore, that he had an obdurate rascal to deal with, the Khaleefa sighed (he naturally prefers a bribe from both sides) and, without a question of any sort, said to Cassim,—

"So, dog, you will fall upon good Muslim in here in Tangier and beat them, eh?" Then, to the soldiers: "Take him to the prison and scourge him well—two hundred strokes. Leave him there."

This quotation is unadorned and as literal as I can make it. Cassim was led away, too proud to

speak. I rode after him toward the prison. My man remained in the court.

Just as we reached the prison's outer courtyard a soldier overtook us, breathless, and followed closely by my Moor. We were ordered back to court. On the way Abd es Selam fell back and explained to me. Cassim's uncle, it appeared, was a man of some substance, and the owner of many mules. He had arrived at court five minutes after Cassim's start from thence for the prison. He had spoken with the Khaleefa, and Selam had watched him count out twelve dollars into his worship's hand. On our return I entered the court at Cassim's heels. This is what passed.

The Khaleefa, good-humouredly: "How is this, Riffi (Cassim)? How comes it you did not tell me you had not truly beaten Mohamet?" Cassim, the Riffi, sulkily: "Lord, why should I talk of such cattle? The beating that I gave him was—"

The Khaleefa: "Eh, eh; shwei, shwei! This my court is not the market-place. I cannot have so much noise. Go away, all of you!"

"But, Lord—" began complainant Mohamet.

"Outside! Away with you, I say! Go and talk to the Kadi." (That is, go and hold your peace; for the Kadi has no jurisdiction in such cases.) So the Riffi swaggered out into the sunshine, and Mohamet, crestfallen, followed him, doubtless meditating a fresh scheme of revenge, in which he would be more careful in the matter of out-bribing his enemy. As a fact, by the way, Cassim is a truculent fellow, and he had rather severely mauled the puling Tangier man, more out of bravado than from any other motive. An inconsiderable affair, truly, but

it must have been fifteen dollars in the worthy Khaleefa's pocket, and it may serve as a fair illustration of Moorish methods in matters big and little where the administration of justice is concerned.

BELOW THE SURFACE

VILLAGES and small towns in Morocco are administered by sheikhs, or elders, and all property of mosques, shrines, receptacles for pious offerings and the like, are under the control of special officials. Such an officer is called a madhir, and he is generally an interested party in at least one law-suit, for the Church of Islam, like the Church in Western communities, has always been inclined to extend its boundaries, and to "creep in" upon the lands and belongings of individuals, to use a phrase which will crop up in dealing with Morocco, while yet the country remains unabsorbed by its neighbour, Algeria. Village administration illustrates clearly how, down to the smallest detail, the feudal and the tribal spirits rule in Morocco. The inhabitants of every village are responsible to their sheikh, he to the nearest basha, who answers to the governor of the province, who again is responsible to the goverment for robbery or other loss by whosoever caused in the neighbourhood of that village. Indeed, the tradesmen in a city street are held liable in the event of robbery or damage in their neighbourhood, and if a foreigner is maltreated or loses property in an affray (often brought about by his own ignorance or insolence), and his consul claims damages from the Moorish Goverment, it is the residents of the street in which the trouble occurred, be they the poorest

and least guilty in the city, who have to suffer and pay.

Touching two widely different classes of foreigners this system produces two bad results. Putting foreigners out of the question, it is well enough adapted to the usages of the community by which it was evolved. The first kind of outlander allows natural kindliness to over-rule his citizen sense, and, well knowing that complaint and the claiming of damages will bring suffering upon innocent persons, allows himself, as ill-luck directs, to be robbed or assaulted without taking any steps to obtain redress. The second sort, a disgrace to Western civilisation, allows mercenary greed to swamp common honesty and common humanity, and, when robbed of a sovereign, claims a £100, and even, failing a convenient pretext, invents, or arranges, a sham assault or robbery to serve as ground upon which to lay a claim against the Moorish Government, and thus afflict a section of the Moorish community by oppression and extortion.

The writer could name at this moment a Christian (in Morocco all foreigners are "Christians"—Nazarenes—or "Jews"—Hûdis)—the son of a European merchant of some standing, who, within the past three years, robbed the Moorish Government and people in this way of some hundreds of pounds—say £400—well knowing that the villagers that were harassed, or, in Moorish phrase, "squeezed," to provide this basis of three months' dissipated living for him were gaunt, country Moors with whom life was an unceasing fight for bare sustenance. This Christian was of the type whose members earn the reputation of being good fellows, genial, happy-go-

lucky, hearty dogs, liberal with their money in bar-rooms, and jovially lewd in conversation. He carefully planned his make-believe robbery with the rascally Tangerine Moor who accompanied him as servant upon a short journey inland. Two days before the event he borrowed ten dollars and a shirt from a friend of mine whose hospitality he abused in an inland town. His every action, during weeks previous to this, had bespoken unmistakable impecuniosity. His entire caravan had scarcely brought him a hundred depreciated Spanish dollars if put up to auction in Tangier Sôk. Yet his claim for goods and money stolen from his tent was fixed at 3000 of those dollars, and, after the usual delays, he actually received $1800 or about £300 sterling.

This man, with his rascally servant and their company, camped outside a village, which only respect for the law that makes the telling of some truths libellous prevents my naming here. The sheikh of that village, acting upon the Arab code of hospitality, sent out the half of a sheep, tea, candles and other small matters for the stranger, with whom, to his credit be it said, he had absolutely nothing in common. The sham robbery, with all the requisite accessories of revolver-shooting and the like, was brought off toward morning. A few months later that hospitable sheikh was visited by Government soldiery, who stripped the village of money, food, stock and all else upon which money might be raised, obtaining the equivalent of perhaps $4000, of which close upon 2000 reached the consul whose misfortune it was to have for fellow-countryman the Christian hero of this sordid escapade.

One wishes it might fairly be added that such

despicable abuses were rare in Morocco. Unfortunately the facts forbid such a commentary. On the contrary, the conclusion one is regretfully forced to by study of the relations of Europeans and Moors in Morocco is that upon the whole these relations have bred deterioration on both sides, and that most notably upon the professedly superior side.

No European resident who has learned to know Morocco cares to have for servant, or as member of his household in any capacity whatever, a Moor who has been brought into sufficiently intimate relations with foreigners to have acquired knowledge of a foreign tongue; no Moor in Morocco is rated so low by his own countrymen, and by foreigners, as the Tangier Moor; and rightly so. (Tangier is, of course, the most Christianised town in the country; the only town, in fact, in which foreign influences have obtained any appreciable hold.) There can be no blinking the tendencies evidenced by these facts. A dozen others, equally suggestive, could be cited by any observant student of the country and its institutions. European standards of right will never be adopted by the Moors, nor yet by any other of those Eastern peoples whose codes were a fixed part of their civilisation while yet half-naked savages worshipped stocks and stones in the future home of the Church of England.

The virtues of the Moors, or, to fit Christendom's standpoint, let us say the best gifts of the Moors, will never be acquired by the Europeans who come into touch with them, for the reason that the product of Western civilisation has little use for these gifts, and would find them as ill-fitting as suits of mail or any other part of the panoply of bygone days. On the other hand, men's vices are infectious and make a

mock of racial bars. The Moors, a decadent nation, find it easy to slip into habits unwholesome even for the Europeans who introduce them, deadly for the unaccustomed Moors who are infected by them. The Westerners, a pushful and a masterful people, find it difficult to hold their own in a country populated by men naturally cunning and unrestrained by the scruples which go to make up the Western code of honour—difficult, if not impossible, without resorting to the weapons of their opponents. Now, the use of those weapons, of cunning, intrigue and fatalistic complaisance, whilst natural and fitting for a Moor among Moors, means a descent into something like criminality for a man of Western faith and up-bringing. And hence the deterioration upon the Christian side which comes of Moorish-European commercial intercourse.

In such matters one speaks of broad results, putting aside isolated cases and individual peculiarities which make for exceptions to all general rules. "It is nothing to do with race or religion; it is only the curse of the money-hunt that is at the root of this deterioration you notice," said a European diplomatist to the present writer. But I think the diplomatist was at fault. The curse of the money-hunt is over all the civilised earth; it is but one of the touchstones, the dangerous points of contact in the corrosive friction referred to here. The fact is that among civilised communities the great majority are centred upon the money-hunt. It is so, also, in the little European community in Morocco. The money-hunt and the restless energy which spurs men to it are integral parts of Western civilisation. Broadly speaking, the great mass of Europeans are engaged

always in the endeavour to make profit one from out another. The description holds good as applied to the most of Europeans in Morocco, where a white man needs must be either a consul or a trader. And that kind of commerce which in Europe is called legitimate, the most honourable sorts of trafficking, would certainly not prove profitable in Morocco. Yet the men of Europe are not wont to engage persistently in unprofitable commerce. The true deduction is obvious.

But the deteriorating influence goes farther, and even the few who are not, primarily at all events, interested in the money-hunt can seldom altogether escape it, though, in the case of this small section, honour may go unscathed; the man moral may hold his own; the man emotional, in nine cases out of ten, must suffer. Morocco is nominally an independent realm. European notions of right and wrong, humanity and inhumanity, cannot therefore be upheld or enforced in Morocco. A European resident of the country is brought daily into contact with cases which, judged by his standards, display gross inhumanity and criminal immorality. His attitude toward these things must needs be one of protest and opposition, or of silent contempt. Now, silent contempt is apt to lapse into indifference, and indifference soon becomes something like tacit approval; and that spells, at least, emotional deterioration for the individual. Active protest, on the other hand, while Morocco remains the Moorish Empire, means broken health, broken fortune, shattered nerves and failure, probable exile from the country, certain failure.

These are not pleasing statements to make, and

as only actual experience can convince the average man of their truth, the making of them is an ungrateful task, and a painful one to boot, for a lover of Morocco. But they are true, and, making them here, the lover of Morocco who writes these lines is reminded of many a tale that would demonstrate the truth of them clearly enough. But such tales are all of wrong-doing, of cruelty and of deterioration. They are sordid stories, both those that tell of white men's treachery to the ideals of their race and those that show how contact with our belauded civilisation has corroded the souls and enfeebled the bodies of fine, lusty young semi-savages among the mountain men of Sunset Land. I had liefer tell you of exceptions, I think.

You remember the young Sheikh of Tazigah, Abd el Majeed, who unsuccessfully endeavoured to skewer a portly Customs administrator in the supposed interests of a fellow-countryman of my own? That same friend of mine has written down for me some few of the Sheikh's experiences in England after they left Tangier together. I must give you these.

THE SHEIKH AND THE DIAMOND

WHEN Sheikh Abd el Majeed landed with me from the P. & O. boat at the docks in London I felt constrained to point out to him that the London Customs authorities were neither tyrants nor brigands, that they would not insult or prey upon us, and that a new arrival must by no means draw dagger upon them. I remembered our adventure beside the old pier at Tangier, you see, and knew of the deadly-curved weapon, with its sheath and hilt of fretted silver, that hung by a rope of green silk under Majeed's left arm-pit. His snowy djellab covered all, however, and gave him the most innocent sort of exterior.

An apter hand at picking up a language than my friend, Sheikh Abd el Majeed, I have yet to meet. Already, though it was less than a week since our victorious, if not very dignified, departure from Morocco, he had quite a good deal of English, and was able to make himself understood in the most masterful speech known to Christendom—not with fluency, of course, but sufficiently. Vegetables were always "keftables" with Majeed, and breakfast was "brefkiss"; bullocks or cows were "cattles," and the flesh of his body was Majeed's "meat." But what would you? He could ask for what he wanted in this life, and his dignity was such that if he had had to chase his fez along the gutter on a windy day and

apologise for knocking over an apple-woman in the chase, I am convinced that he could and would have accomplished it without turning a hair or appearing in the least ridiculous. It is a singular thing, that; but you may put a Moorish gentleman in any sort of position or predicament that you shall choose, and however absurd it be he will never look less than a Moorish gentleman, which is to say a monument of reposeful dignity.

My people were somewhat astonished when I arrived at the dear old place at Crookham Highlow with the Sheikh. He created something of a sensation at Crookham station, with his bare, corn-coloured legs, and his vivid, lemon-coloured slippers and flowing robes. The rumour went abroad that I had brought an Indian prince home with me (there are a number of retired Anglo-Indian officials in the Crookham district, and the village prides itself upon its Eastern lore), and all the callers at the Hall were anxious to see Abd el Majeed. I was glad to be home again—for a while—despite the pile of bills that lay on the table in my den; and the first evening stands out clearly in my recollection—a cheery picture to keep in one's mind to look at on cloudy days, or when the thread of one's affairs grows more than ordinarily twisted.

We sat in the big hall, where a low fire smouldered on the hearth though summer was at hand. My father smoked his cigar in his favourite great oak chair, with the ecclesiastical-looking wings, which I always said made it remind one of a sacristy. My mother was on the couch beside the chimney; my little sister Betty (there were never but the two of us in our family) was curled upon a cushion at my

feet, giving me the news of the year and the gossip of the parish; and at the foot of the stairs, where a broad ray of light from the staircase window told us the moon was almost as its full, Sheikh Abd el Majeed squatted in his snowy robes, fingering a gimbri he had brought with him, and supplying for me the Oriental and picturesque element required to make our little picture perfect. A gimbri, you must know, is a queer, melodious little instrument much in favour among all sorts and conditions of Moors, and not unlike a mandolin.

Long after our father and mother had left us for the night, I lounged there, and smoked and listened to Betty's chat, and watched the moonlight stroking Majeed's scarlet fez, with its long, dark blue tassel. It seemed we were all going to Harborough in a few days, to spend a week with old friends, the Stuart-Grahams, who were giving a grand ball in honour of the coming of age of their only daughter, Elsie, who had been a sweetheart of mine when we were both children and the Stuart-Grahams had lived in Crookham Highlow. Betty was madly excited at the prospect, and I gathered that the reason of her rejoicing was that a certain Lieutenant Foster of the 11th Hussars, a man I had never met, would be one of our fellow-guests at Frampton House, the Stuart-Grahams' place. This Lieutenant Foster had met Betty at Cowes, it seemed, and had subsequently spent a week or two with his mother, I understood, at our place, when the house had been full of visitors. Of course, little Betty did not tell me the thing in so many words, but I could plainly see she was as much in love with the Lieutenant as a girl dare be before a man proposes to her; and I mentally prayed that

Foster might prove a decent sort, whilst promising myself to make his acquaintance and keep a very sharp eye on the young man.

"I'm a selfish beggar to remain away from home so much," I told myself.

A couple of days later I had a note from Elsie Stuart-Graham, saying she was delighted to hear of my return in time for her ball, and that she had heard from Betty of my "quite delightful Moor!" I was to be very sure and bring Abd el Majeed with me, a room would be set apart for him (as a fact, he always insisted on sleeping at my door) and he would certainly prove the chief attraction of the week; and, finally, the writer was, in inverted commas, affectionately my "Elskins"—the name I had bestowed upon her when we were children together, and now had not heard for at least thirteen or fourteen years. She had been but seven years old when I was twelve.

Accordingly, then, we started in the old landau next morning for the Stuart-Grahams, the distance was no more than twenty-eight miles, so we were to drive, sending the horses back on the following day. My father held that the railway was a useful institution for the transport of one's luggage, but that it was no "conveyance for a gentleman, sir, while there is a decent pair of horses in the land"—Sheikh Abd el Majeed, attired resplendently, and gravely fingering his rosary, sat beside old Sparrow, our coachman, on the box, and viewed the country round indulgently, as one who, being himself of the Faith, and sure of a superfine pavilion in Paradise, could afford to overlook small discrepancies in the lives and properties of unbelieving and less-favoured mortals here upon earth. I afterwards ascertained that he

treated Sparrow to a lengthy dissertation upon the art of driving and the general management of horses; Majeed, who, though a perfect horseman, had never seen a vehicle or harness in his life until a week before this day. And the odd thing about it was that old Sparrow, the most autocratic of coachmen, took it all in good part, and expressed great good feeling and admiration where the Sheikh was concerned. This may have been partly owing to the fact that he understood no more than about twenty per cent. of what the Moor said. But it was doubtless also owing, in part, to the extreme charm and dignity of the Sheikh's manner and bearing.

The ball took place on the night following that of our arrival at Frampton House, and, for a reason that will afterwards appear, my dear little sister Betty went to bed with tears in her blue eyes when all was over, and I went cursing Lieutenant Foster, and longing unreasonably for an excuse to pull his nose without involving my sister. And that was not at all as it should have been in a house full of happy guests, bent seriously upon no other thing than festivity.

Elsie, the daughter of the house, in whose honour all this jollification was, created quite a sensation, and was acknowledged a beauty. Her demeanour was quite charming, but I had no eyes for that, being occupied with my little sister's distress about the confounded Lieutenant. To be sure, everybody was smitten by the charms of Elsie; but to my unreasonable brother's mind it did appear that Lieutenant Foster had no earthly right to share the common fate, or to number himself so obsequiously among the beauty's court. He must have given Betty good

THE MOORISH SOLDIER FROM LIFE; AN ELDERLY BUT AVERAGE SPECIMEN

THE MOORISH SOLDIER—AS DEPICTED BY AN ARTIST OF THE NAZARENES

grounds for entertaining toward him the feelings she had, I thought; and so— Confound the man!—he deserved horse-whipping for bringing tears to her eyes by joining the throng that paid court to Elsie. Feeling all this as I did, I hardly exchanged a dozen words with "Elskins" myself, though she did give me several opportunities.

When Elsie's health was drunk, all standing at supper, I am bound to say I think I never saw a woman, young or old, look more radiantly beautiful. She was exquisitely dressed in some mysterious white material, and upon her head she wore the famous Stuart-Graham tiara, given her that day by her father, the General. Now, you have probably heard of the Stuart-Graham tiara—everyone has; but unless you have held it in your hand you can hardly hope to realise what a superb thing it is, with the great Rajput diamond blazing out of its centre like the eye of some wondrous genie of Eastern story. How the General became possessed of this historic gem I cannot say; but I know that experts call it the seventh jewel in the world, and I should call it the most wonderful thing of its sort I ever saw. General Stuart-Graham was for years Commander-in-Chief at the court of the Rajput Maharajah of Jeysulmeer, but it was certainly wonderful that he should have become the owner of the famous Jeysulmeer diamond. However, it was his, and it served to make the otherwise beautiful Stuart-Graham tiara a crown of exceeding glory; just as the tiara served to make an otherwise beautiful maiden a queen of exceeding loveliness on the night of Elsie's ball. The Stuart-Graham champagne was well enough, as '84 Pommery must needs be, but it seemed that Elsie and her tiara

turned the heads of the men, quite apart from her father's excellent wine.

"And to think that if I only had diamonds like Elsie's, Lieutenant—to think— Oh, how I wish her diamonds were mine!" half sobbed poor little Betty when I walked with her as far as her door after the ball. Behind us stalked the Sheikh. In some mysterious way of his own he seemed to have grasped the inwardness of the situation.

"Lalla," said he, as he bade my sister good-night (he always addressed Betty and my mother in this way, as "Lady") "we are in Allah's hands, and truly only He knows." He lapsed into Arabic, looking to me for interpretation. "If it be written that you should have such jewels, you will certainly have them. In any case, all will be well for you. Therefore, grieve not. We are in God's hands."

And so we parted for the night, the Sheikh following me as usual to my room. There I left him, however, having an itching desire to see more of the man who had made my sister so unhappy. I knew the lieutenant had made for the big smoking-room, so I betook myself thither for a final smoke, bent upon making some study of the man. If he seemed to me the mere trifler that I suspected he was, I intended that our acquaintance should not be a very agreeable one for him.

Several guests left the house on the following morning, and workmen were about the hall and staircase, removing decorations of a temporary character which had been arranged for the ball. We, however, were to remain for another two or three days, and so was Lieutenant Foster. I noticed that he strolled out into the garden with Elsie soon after

breakfast, and Betty's eyes met mine, sadly, as the two disappeared from view.

"Hang the man!" I muttered; and, lighting a cigar, started with Betty, followed as usual by Sheikh Abd el Majeed, to see the kennels. The General kept a pack of otter hounds, and his kennels were famous.

A few minutes before luncheon, when most of the household were gathered together in the hall, we all became aware (I was never sure exactly how the news arrived) that something serious had happened. For some little time there was muttering, and running to and fro, and a general buzz of uneasiness, without anyone appearing to know precisely what the trouble was. Then the General came marching out of the library, and ran upstairs, taking three steps in one, with never a word to the rest of us. Half a minute later Mrs Stuart-Graham announced that the famous tiara, containing the Jeysulmeer diamond, the seventh jewel in the world, had been stolen from Elsie's bedroom. She used the word "lost," but—one does not drop famous tiaras under corners of one's carpets.

If one of the guests in the house had been killed it could hardly have created more of a sensation, or spread more gloom over the house. We all knew that this was no ordinary misfortune, and that the loss of this tiara was the loss of a fortune from the monetary standpoint, and of a historic treasure apart from its mere selling value. It was one of those events which are a little too serious to talk about, and which yet cannot be overlooked in talk with those concerned. Before the dinner-hour arrived we were all feeling this so strongly that the guests decided in a body to curtail their visits and leave on the following

day. Some, in fact, left that evening, Lieutenant Foster among them; and my father telegraphed for his horses during the afternoon, and decided that we should set out homewards next morning.

In the meantime the General received the following telegraphic message from Scotland Yard in reply to one he had sent off as soon as the loss was discovered :—

"Two men on way to your house. Please detain everybody in house."

"Well, that is all right," said the General, a man very loyal to his class and to his friends. "No one has left except—er—except our own—that is to say, only our friends have left the house to-day. There are a good many work-folk about, and those can wait till these police fellows come." An order was given that no servant was to leave the premises, and we settled down for an evening of chill discomfort.

At six o'clock the detectives arrived, and it was explained to us that the boxes of all the servants were to be examined, and that therefore, as a matter of form, the General would be obliged if we would allow the detectives to go through our baggage.

"It's rather ridiculous and a nuisance, of course," the old gentleman explained, nervously. "But these fellows have their own methods, and they won't do anything if one interferes; so I hope you will excuse it. The Jeysulmeer simply must be found."

Altogether, it was a very dismal evening, and matters were in no way enlivened by the detective's announcement, towards ten o'clock that evening, that they had as yet found no clue to go upon. The little

telegraph station at Harborough was kept busy that evening, and detailed descriptions of the tiara, and of the famous diamond, were placed with the police throughout the kingdom, and with all the diamond-dealers of note on both sides of the Channel. The poor old General grew more nervous and irritable as time wore on, and whilst exceedingly sorry for him, I am bound to say that I was very thankful to see Sparrow with the bays and the old landau drawn up before the terrace next morning. Elsie I had hardly spoken to since the trouble began. I knew that she was dreadfully upset about it, and blamed herself greatly for having been the unwitting cause of what, from her father's point of view, was nothing less than a calamity. It seemed she had left the gorgeous thing in a drawer of her wardrobe instead of locking it in the heavy little fire-proof safe which her careful father had had placed in her dressing-room to receive it. I felt sorry for Elsie when she bade me an almost tearful good-bye. And so I think did my sister Betty, despite her soreness in the matter of her Lieutenant, a soreness which I shared, so to say, vicariously.

"Good-bye, Elskins!" said I, with what I meant to be as cheering a smile as possible. "Don't think too much about the Jeysulmeer. I am sure it will be found soon. It's too gorgeous for a thief to dispose of. And anyhow, you will always be charming without it."

And she was charming, too, I thought, as she looked up at me through lashes that were suspiciously moist.

Betty had her own private trouble, and my father and mother, and myself, too, for that matter, were pretty fully, and not cheerfully, occupied with thoughts

of the Stuart-Grahams' loss. Sparrow had, of course, heard the news, and felt called upon to wear a most funereal expression in consequence. Only Sheikh Abd el Majeed was unaffected by the trouble in the air, and he alone of our party smiled serenely upon the circumambient country from his seat upon the box. Tiaras were nothing to the Sheikh. He had that within which passeth show, and was convinced that the houris who would attend him in Paradise would bear about them jewels, the smallest fragment of which would infinitely transcend anything that mere unbelievers could even dream of seeing, not to mention possessing, here on earth.

We reached the Hall in time for afternoon tea, and I saw nothing of the Sheikh until I went to my room to dress for dinner. There I found him, squatting upon a West African leopard skin, and idly strumming at his gimbri, his face a picture of serene felicity. I had just finished dressing, and was in the act of lighting a before-dinner cigarette to take with the glass of sherry which el Majeed had brought me, when I heard a little scream from the adjoining apartment, which was my sister Betty's dressing-room. A moment later, and, with the merest pretence of a knock at my door, Betty was beside me, gasping from astonishment and holding before her, as it might be a salver, the famous Stuart-Graham tiara.

"On the table in my dressing-room, under a handkerchief! I had dressed in my bedroom, as it happened. Oh—oh! Whatever does it mean?"

"Good Lord!" I cried. Heaven alone knew what it meant, I thought. But there indubitably was the Jeysulmeer. No seeing person could mistake that dazzling jewel for anything else but its own marvellous

self. It fairly flamed at me in Betty's hand. I declare in the circumstances it was positively uncanny; and I regarded it with a shiver of something like fear. All sorts of horrid thoughts swept through my mind, conveying no sensible meaning to me, but only vague mistrust and horror. For me, I am altogether with Prince Florizel now in thinking that, outside the treasure-houses of monarchs, such fabulously valuable jewels are an unmitigated curse to mankind. I cannot tell you of the horrible thoughts the thing gave me. Such priceless stones would cause gloom, suspicion and dissension among the truest friends upon earth.

"My dear Betty," I stammered lamely, "how—how the devil did the thing come into your possession?"

I have always been thankful that the Sheikh was there and heard and saw the whole thing. I think that wretched diamond must have evilly possessed me in some way. I don't know exactly what I thought, but I had poor little Betty in my arms sobbing, a moment later, while from over her shoulder I saw and heard the Sheikh explaining in his own bland manner.

"It is nothing," said he, with the deprecatory air of one who disclaims thanks for some small favour. "Lalla Bettee, she like this thing she say. I get it for her. It is nothing—nothing at all. Those people he get no sense. He look in the boxes—Phaa! I carry it under my kaftan. It was quite easy. Now Lalla Bettee has it for her own. I am glad. But it was nothing—nothing at all."

Heard ever man the like of it! And I knew that at that moment detectives were hunting for this blazing toy in every capital in Europe. Hundreds of

pounds had probably been spent already in the search. Every diamond-dealer in the hemisphere was thinking of the thing. The Stuart-Grahams were at their wits' end about it. Poor little Elsie was probably crying her eyes out, and the General was doubtless fretting his nerves to ribbons over this world-famous tiara which Abd el Majeed had plucked like a flower and brought away among his garments, as he supposed to gratify a whim of my sister's.

I sat down at last from sheer stress of bewilderment, with Betty on my knee, and the Sheikh still muttering that it was "nothing—nothing at all!" before us. It was hopeless to try to convey any adequate explanation of the situation to the Sheikh. I did try to tell him that my family might be eternally ruined and disgraced, and myself imprisoned for life, and various other little matters of that sort as the result of his kindly-meant insanity. He could not see it at all. The "Lalla Bettee" had wanted the thing, and he, the Sheikh, with the exercise of a little ordinary care and skill, had obtained it for her. And there was an end of it.

Finally, I dried Betty's tears and sent her away to make my excuses at dinner. Then I sat down to consider the situation. The more I thought of it the uglier the whole affair looked. That was the horrible thing about this wretched Jeysulmeer. Contact with it robbed one of all confidence or self-respect, it seemed. I have said that I cannot tell you the thoughts which the sight of the thing inspired in me. The idea of going to old General Stuart-Graham, returning him his priceless tiara and telling him we had brought it away in error, seemed to me the very most impossible sort of idea that had ever occurred to

mortal man. And here it falls to me to make a confession.

For one wretched minute I harboured some such thought as this in my mind: They have lost their tiara now, they will grow used to the loss in time; cut into sections, the Jeysulmeer and the other stones would represent a fortune for any man; with a fortune I—

I will attempt no apology. The jewel bewitched me, I really believe; a baleful, horrible devil of an ornament!

At least its baleful influence brought decision to me.

"This won't do," I said aloud, "it won't do at all. This plaguy tiara has just got to be returned the way it came, and Abd el Majeed must see to it."

Half an hour later I was cantering over Crookham heath, the Sheikh mounted on a serviceable chestnut hack beside me, and the infernal tiara in a leather collar-box strapped in a knapsack on my shoulders. My idea, which, of course, the Sheikh thought a singularly crazy one, was that we should reach Harborough about eleven o'clock, effect a burglarious entry in some manner at Frampton House, and manage to return the tiara to the room from which it had been taken without seeing anyone. The whole thing was risky and unpleasant, to be sure; but when you shall find yourself possessed of stolen property to the value of many thousands of pounds, you will realise that it is worth getting rid of at whatever risk. The risk involved in the retaining of the jewel even for a single night seemed to me infinitely more desperate than any other that I could be brought to face. So on we rode, with our priceless collar-box, the Sheikh and myself.

Harborough church clock was striking the half-hour after eleven as the amateur burglars, Sheikh Abd el Majeed and myself, led our horses into an old and disused chalk-pit situate some few hundred yards from the lodge-gates of Frampton House. Fortunately for us the kennels are placed at the lower end of the park, and three-quarters of a mile from Frampton House, whilst I knew that no dogs were kept about the house itself. We tied our horses in the brush at the far end of the old chalk-pit, and cautiously made our way to the park palings at some distance from the lodge. These were easily scaled, and within a quarter of an hour we were approaching the rear premises across cabbage beds in the kitchen garden. Not a single light was visible in the whole great house. I was thankful for that.

A glint of moonlight showed me the Sheikh's face as we entered a sort of court-yard upon which the laundry, the carpenter's shop, the fuel-houses, and various other offices opened. He was evidently as calm, as cool, and as entirely self-possessed as though we had been bent upon an evening stroll for the better digestion of our dinner. My own case was far otherwise, and I will admit frankly that my knees shook when, with a casual wave of his white-draped arm, the Sheikh indicated to me the half-open window of a scullery.

For a house which had contained the seventh jewel in the world the General's establishment was certainly but poorly secured against burglars or other such questionable characters as Sheikh Abd el Majeed and myself. Stepping through the scullery window was simple, though I did put my foot into a small bath full of liquid starch. From this scullery to the

servants' hall was but a few steps; and then, with never a bolt or lock to touch, we reached the main staircase, which at that moment was lighted with embarrasing distinctness by the moon shining through a stained glass window in the gallery above.

I had explained to Majeed that he must lead me to the door of Elsie's dressing-room, since that was the apartment from which he had abstracted the horrible jewel of Jeysulmeer. I meant to place it upon a table there, in such a position as would attract immediate attention, and then, as I left the room, to lock the door from outside. Thus, I thought, Elsie cannot fail to find her treasure when she goes into her dressing-room in the morning, by the door communicating with her bedroom. I had ascertained from the Sheikh that the two rooms did communicate. My boots—the starchy one and its fellow—I had left in the scullery, where the Sheikh's yellow slippers kept them company. So—I upon my stockinged feet and the Sheikh bare-footed—we crept over the thick stair-carpet to the dressing-room door.

"You are certain?" I breathed nervously to my companion in crime as he stopped outside a door separated by no more than a few feet from another like it.

The Sheikh nodded his certainty, and I handed him the tiara (the collar-box I had left with my boots) that I might devote both hands to the task of noiselessly opening the door. It was a good amenable sort of door, and yielded without creak or murmur to my infinitely gentle suasion. Then el Majeed handed me the tiara, from which at that moment the moonlight extracted a curious bluish radiance, very beauti-

ful, no doubt, but to me, in my highly ambiguous position, very distracting.

A dressing-table faced me as I entered the room, and the moonlight showed me an open space before the mirror, intended by Providence, it seemed, for the accommodation of the tiara. I stepped out cautiously toward it, the tiara held before me as a footman holds a plate. As I laid the fateful thing upon a sort of satin mat the sound of a faint sigh upon my right almost brought me to the floor in nervous confusion, to such a pitch were my nerves strung by this adventure and the cruelly false position in which it placed me.

I turned toward the place from which the sigh came. I had to turn to retrace my steps. And as I turned I faced, not hanging garments, cupboards, wardrobes, or anything pertaining to a dressing-room, but a small white bed, with an eider-down hanging low upon one side of it, and a white-draped figure rising from its other side, with wide, staring eyes fixed upon me in astonishment and horror.

I was in Elsie's bedroom, and Elsie, rising from her prayers, was facing me across her bed, her great eyes flitting from the blazing tiara on the dressing-table to my doubtless criminally guilty face.

I found my tongue somehow.

"For God's sake, Elskins," I whispered hoarsely, "don't cry out! It's all a horrible mistake. You know me, Elskins. For heaven's sake don't make a noise! I—I am going down to the kitchen. Please put something on and come down there, so that—so that I may explain this horrible business. Please—Elskins!"

You will admit that it was a trying ordeal for a

young girl to face—almost as trying as it was for me, though not quite, I fancy. She behaved like the pearl she is.

"Go, then," said she, "I will come in a minute."

And she did; and down there among the glistening copper, and china, and what not, I told her the whole miserable tale, and knew that she knew that it was true. I was absolutely frank about it; I had a need to be. So I told her all about poor Betty's trouble, and tried to make her understand how it was that the Sheikh, in the Oriental innocence of his heart, came to be guilty of this colossal peculation.

"I am so sorry," murmured Elsie—I had never realised before what glorious hair she had. "And it was all such a mistake; such a funny mistake, too. Why, I never gave a thought to Lieutenant Foster. Indeed, I—" And then, as I live, the dear girl blushed all over her sweet face, and I—I realised that I loved her better than all the world beside, and—it's an awkward thing to tell—that mine was not a bit a hopeless love.

Well, it's an old story now. Elsie hid the tiara away under a lot of frocks and things in her wardrobe, and so schemed that her maid should discover it next morning in her presence; and she loyally stood up to the General's choleric lecture upon her unpardonable carelessness, and—all was well. I galloped home with the Sheikh that night the happiest man in England, and later on Betty and Lieutenant Foster chose our wedding-day—Elsie's and mine—for their own; and the Sheikh, as his way was ever, smiled blandly upon us all.

But the tiara is at the General's bank; and so far as I am concerned it may remain there.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S AIGRETTE

I BELIEVE I am perfectly safe in surmising that the most interesting and exciting days of my friend Sheikh Abd el Majeed's stay in England with me fell out during the presence in London of the Moorish Mission to the Court of St James. The members of the Mission were housed by the authorities in a substantial mansion in the neighbourhood of Princes Gate, and as I was staying at the time in my father's town house in Sloane Street, with Abd el Majeed, of course, the distance between the Sheikh and his compatriots was trifling. Further, when I tell you that the head of the Mission, Sidi Abd er-Rahman Kintafi, was the uncle of the third wife of my Sheikh's father, it will easily be seen that el Majeed had some grounds for the frequency of his visits to the mansion at Princes Gate, and was in no danger of wearing his welcome thin there.

Myself, as it were vicariously, and by the light reflected from my Moorish friend, became something of a *persona grata* with the members of the Mission, and, as no other members of my family were then in town, I found it easy, upon more than one occasion, to recompense the hospitality with which the Mission welcomed me at Princes Gate by entertaining old Sidi Abd er-Rahman and his followers in Sloane Street. Knowing something of Moorish affairs and customs, I was enabled to make them very comfort-

able there, and I am not sure whether any of the more or less splendid functions in which our Government paid honour to his Shareefian Majesty of Morocco, through his Ambassador, were sources of more real enjoyment to Abd er-Rahman and his party than were the little informal *réunions* in my father's Sloane Street residence.

Be that as it may, I am quite sure that the authorities of our Foreign Office had found much food for reflection (could they have overheard them) in some of the conversations which took place there between the members of the Mission and myself. The Moors accepted me as an unofficial friend, belched over my green tea, specially procured for their delectation, devoured bushels of kesk'soo prepared for them in our kitchens under the supervision of the Sheikh, were generous in their admiration of the two ladies from the "Halls" who were good enough upon one occasion to demonstrate before us some of the intricacies of the art of skirt-dancing, and altogether relaxed themselves agreeably from the formality of ambassadorial life in the capital of the British Empire.

Their comments upon affairs of state were highly interesting to me, and their remarks regarding the conduct of great officials in our land and in theirs would have been startling, I fancy, to the grand Bashas who rule in Downing Street. For example, I remember the venerable Sidi Abd er-Rahman Kintafi having some little discussion with me regarding the social status in London of the ladies of the ballet who had so delighted him with their exhibition of skirt-dancing. He asked if they would be accorded positions of special honour during royal receptions

and the like at the Court of St James. I replied that I hardly thought so.

"Then it is indeed as I thought," said the Ambassador; "and there can be no doubt but that your English Government is mightily afraid of my master, Abd el Aziz of Morocco, and desires to pay him most humble court, despite the occasional loud talk of sending warships to enforce claims and the like. Such talk need not be seriously considered by us who are of the Faithful, I think."

I requested further enlightenment as to these somewhat remarkable conclusions of the Ambassador's.

"Well, thou seest," he explained, "in our country the women of our dalliance, the slaves of our women's quarters, are not thought of seriously by persons of rank. They are not at all as wives, you understand. Now, when I came across the water to your country here, being a man of note in mine own country and standing high in the favour of my master—may Allah prolong his days!—I naturally brought some three or four of my women with me—slaves, thou knowest; it is not fitting that a believer should subject his wives to the hazards of travel among infidels. Now when those my female slaves did alight from the great ship, your Lord Chamberlain and the high representatives of your Sovereign, who came to greet us, did respectfully turn their backs until such time as these my slave women were effectually hidden in the train; and in dismounting from the train here in London it was the same; and carefully closed and shuttered carriages were provided for them, your greatest officials humbly bowing and turning aside from their path, much to the secret merriment of these my slaves, who each and all knew what it was to

chaffer openly in Marrakish market-place with lowly sellers of vegetables, and that with scarcely a cloth over their lips—if I may be pardoned for naming matters so private. Thus then am I assured that my master and his messengers are greatly feared and reverenced here among the infidels, who bow down with so much humility even before the lowliest slaves among us."

My British pride was made somewhat sore by this recital, but in the most of the stories and comments I listened to in the mansion at Princes Gate and in my father's Sloane Street house I was moved far more to merriment and interest than to anything approaching annoyance; and I saw more clearly than ever before that the art of diplomacy lay not merely in veiling the truth, but in setting up an untruth in place thereof; and further, that the greatest diplomatists appeared to be those who deceived themselves far more than they deceived others, and that the ostrich, who looks to hide himself by burying his own eyes in the sand, must be the greatest of all diplomatists that live.

During one of my first visits with Sheikh Abd el Majeed to the mansion near Princes Gate I made the acquaintance there of a young gentleman fresh from the University of Oxford, whose name was Jones, and whose nature seemed equally stereotyped, conventional, and innocently respectable. What he was doing in that galley I was never quite able to understand; but I gathered that he was a sort of third cousin to one of the gentlemen attached to our embassy in Morocco, and that he cherished mild hopes of one day entering the diplomatic service himself, a career for which I ventured to think that his bland preoccupation with the purely unpractical affairs

of life fitted him to admiration. I never met a young gentleman who so exactly resembled a character in some agreeable and fantastic comedy or story rather than a flesh-and-blood personage in this busy, striving, work-a-day world of ours. His innocence regarding the Oriental character was most marked, and his interest in the affairs of the Mission was, like his complexion, singularly fresh, unstained and pleasing. And that is really all I know about Mr Jones, beyond the fact that he hired a Court dress for four guineas from a Jew in Covent Garden in order that he might appear at Court in the train of Sidi Abd er-Rahman Kintafi, and that in the course of conversation he generally made pleasant and innocent remarks which bore in some way either upon cricket, photography or the University of Oxford.

The morning of the Mission's first reception at the Court of St James was a truly great occasion for my friend, Sheikh Abd el Majeed. As a relative of Sidi Abd er-Rahman's he accompanied the Mission, whilst I settled myself with a cigar and a novel in the Princes Gate Mansion to await the return of my Moorish friends and hear their account of their brave doings. Mr Jones was among the European attendants upon the Mission, resplendent in his Covent Garden costume, though a little nervous, I fancied, with regard to the proper disposition of his nickel-plated sword. He seemed to be greatly inspirited by my assuring him that he looked "ripping." I chose the adjective with forethought, and I think it served its turn.

Scarcely had the Mission departed in the four coaches from the royal stables which had come to convey them, than one of the footmen attached to

the mansion presented me with the card of a gentleman, who described himself as a "Photographic Artist," in handsome old English lettering, and said that he had come by appointment with the head of the Mission to take portraits of the Moorish Ambassador and his suite on their return from audience at the Palace. I requested the footman to show this Mr Gerald Montgomery into the morning-room, where I then sat over my novel, and prepared to entertain him pending the return of the Mission.

Mr Montgomery proved to be a gentleman whose artistic temperament displayed itself conspicuously in the fashion of his neck-tie, a truly æsthetic piece of drapery, in the arrangement of his glossy and plenteous locks, and in the almost effusive graciousness of his general demeanour. He carried a camera and other photographic impedimenta with him, and was attired most elegantly in clothes which I am assured must have been obtained from the most expensive quarter of Bond Street. In conversation I found him what my grandmother would have called an agreeable rattle; and, putting aside what seemed to me an excessive devotion to the use of strong perfumes, and a rather nervous alertness in manner, both of which peculiarities I connected in some way with his artistic temperament, I am bound to say that I found Mr Montgomery as pleasant a person to pass the time of day with as you would meet in a day's march.

It was upon the return of the Mission from their presentation at Court that Mr Montgomery's habits of nervousness and the manipulation of a strongly-scented handkerchief became most strongly marked. But, to be sure, they were not the sort of peculiarities

at which a man takes umbrage, and for my part I was moved to friendly sympathy with the Photographic Artist in his trepidation among the exalted foreigners, the more so when I overheard old Sidi Abd er-Rahman growling in his beard, after I had introduced Mr Montgomery, something to the effect that,—

"The Kaffir son of a burnt Kaffir has no right here among the Faithful. He plagued me with his letters, but I did not truly say that he might come here."

Out of sheer good-nature I assured the old Moor that upon this occasion, when himself and his suite presented so imposing an appearance, it would be a thousand pities not to have some permanent record of their magnificence. As a fact, I think my appeal to his vanity won over Abd er-Rahman and gained the day for the Photographic Artist. The Ambassador had a fancy for a picture of himself robed more splendidly than he would ever be in his own land, where the Koranic injunctions regarding display of finery and the like are very strictly followed by all classes. About his neck was a fine rope of pearls, and in one side of his ample turban was stuck a magnificent aigrette of diamonds and emeralds, lent him for this one occasion by his royal master, to whom it had been presented by a great Indian Rajah who once made pilgrimage to the shrine of Moulai Idrees in Fez.

Mr Montgomery floridly bowed his most graceful acknowledgements of my efforts to further his cause, and it was arranged that he should first take a picture of Sidi Abd er-Rahman, the Ambassador, alone, and then one of the whole Mission. So now all our energies were bent upon the task of arranging a becom-

ing pose for his Excellency, to which end a sort of throne was prepared from a number of cushions, a huge armchair, and a daïs for the same to stand upon.

I suppose the now beaming and most gracious Mr Montgomery must have stepped back and forward between his velvet-covered camera and the throne of Abd er-Rahman some score of times in all before he was quite satisfied regarding the pose of his Excellency's venerable person, and particularly of his massive and turbaned head.

"You will pardon the liberty," said he, with smiling deference, as he slightly moved the becrowned head with both his delicate hands; and, myself having interpreted the remark, his Excellency was pleased to signify his complacence. "There! That is perfect. Exactly so, for one moment, please!"

The Photographic Artist almost rushed back to the great velvet cover of his machine, and hiding himself therein, emerged, after a few seconds, smiling rapturously and announcing that the operation had been eminently satisfactory.

"And now for the group," said the rosy-cheeked Mr Jones, who seemed to have grown quite at home in his knee-breeches and silk stockings by this time. and carried his tinkling sword with the ease of long familiarity with the air of Courts.

So we set about arranging ourselves in more or less picturesque attitudes at one end of the apartment, until brought to order by the Photographic Artist, who seemed inclined to hurry over this portion of the programme, I thought, and who said now that we should do very well as we were.

"It was only the portrait of Abd er-Rahman that he

was anxious to secure," I told myself. "And that done, he wants to get away."

And, indeed, it was rather remarkable, the rapidity with which Mr Montgomery completed his arrangements in the matter of this second operation.

"That must be a deuced funny sort of a camera; I should very much like to have a look at it," murmured Mr Jones over my left shoulder. "How in the world he can focus the whole lot of us at that distance, spread out like this, I can't imagine. It must be one of Stuhpelheit's new cameras, I fancy. I must see the photographer about it before he goes. Phew! Why, by Jove, he's finished, and he never took the cap off! That's devilish odd, you know. I must cer—"

And at that moment a great shout arose from Ibn Marzuk, his Excellency's slipper-bearer,—

"My Lord's crown, the eyes of light with the flowers of emerald—where are they?"

Every eye was turned upon the snowy turban of his Excellency. The magnificent aigrette no longer blazed over his right temple; the Sultan's jewels, worth a king's ransom, men said, had vanished utterly.

"To the doors!" screamed old Abd er-Rahman, who no doubt had seen something of theft and thievery during his thirty years at the Court of Morocco. And to be sure it would be no joke for him, this particular loss. His Shareefian Majesty has a short way with defaulting ministers, and failing the return of his aigrette, the chances were that Sidi Abd er-Rahman would enjoy small favour, but only a very painful and drawn-out kind of death on his return to Sunset Land.

I, for one, was prepared to swear that the aigrette

had been in its place when his Excellency returned from the presentation at Court. Its wonderful sheen and brilliance had attracted my attention whilst the Ambassador was being posed for his portrait.

There was a whispered consultation among the Moors, from which I caught a growl from the Ambassador with reference to "El Azfel," that is the bastinado, for the "N'zrani," or the Christians. Then it was announced by his Excellency's secretary that everyone present was to be searched, with the exception, of course, of the great man himself. I could think of nothing pertinent to urge against this step, though I could see that it moved my young friend, Mr Jones, to very marked disgust and wrath. As for the Photographic Artist, the only other "Nazarene" then present, he was most obliging in the matter, and, having expressed deep regret regarding this singular incident, moved his camera aside and stood beside Mr Jones and myself, with his hands raised above his head, like a man "bailed up" by brigands, the better, I suppose, to facilitate a thorough search of his person. Certainly I could see that this action of his commended him favourably to Sidi Abd er-Rahman, though it did not appear to please Mr Jones.

"Bai Jove!" muttered that young gentleman. "Does he think we are a lot of bally pick-pockets, or convicts, or what?"

To cut the story short, let me say that we were all very thoroughly searched, Moors and Christians alike, and never a sign of the Sultan's splendid aigrette was discovered. Anger and consternation strove for mastery in the almost livid face of the old Ambassador. I gathered that he was in favour of an

immediate administration of the bastinado, in the case of the Christians present, at all events with a view to encouraging a confession. Then my friend the Sheikh stepped forward.

"Sidi," said he to the Ambassador, "this talk of the stick is worse than foolish where such gentlemen as my friend, for example, are concerned." He waved one hand in my direction, and I acknowledged the tribute with a bow. I have seen the bastinado administered in Sunset Land, and had no wish to prove my honesty by tasting of it myself. "Further, Sidi, I, Abd el Majeed, would myself cut down the first man, though he were our lord the Sultan, who should lay hands upon my friend, whose bread we have all eaten. But—I would have a word with thee privately, Sidi."

The Sheikh drew the Ambassador aside, and together they muttered for some moments, Abd er Rahman nodding his turbaned old head vigorously, as in emphatic agreement with my Sheikh's suggestions. Then the Sheikh moved forward to where a massive silver ink-pot stood upon a writing-table, and raising the lid of the ink-pot, paused to look about him round the room. At length his eyes fell upon Mr Jones, who was somewhat sulkily playing with his sword, and swearing under his breath by Jove, his favourite, apparently, among the gods.

With great politeness the Sheikh requested Mr Jones to approach him and to hold out his right hand. This the young gentleman from the University accordingly did, and into the centre of his pink right palm the Sheikh proceeded to splash a great round blob of ink, which he scooped out of the ink-pot with a sort of ivory egg-spoon (a nail-cleaner, as I

was afterwards informed), handed him for the purpose by one of the attendants.

His ink-blotted pink palm extended before him, Mr Jones followed the Sheikh to the large bay window, and there halted. The Sheikh assumed a demeanour of great earnestness, and passed his extended hands several times to and fro before the young gentleman's face, commanding him at the same time to look fixedly into the little pool of ink upon his right palm. Then ensued whispered talk between the Sheikh and Mr Jones, of which I caught only occasional phrases here and there. That Mr Jones was now as wax in the hands of the Sheikh was apparent to the most casual observer.

"Look well! Where goes he now? Mark well the—"

I caught no more.

Suddenly the Sheikh bent forward and wiped the ink from the hand of Mr Jones. Then he made some further movements with his hands before the young gentleman's face and turned away. Mr Jones shook his head, coughed, blinked once or twice, and walked slowly to my side, muttering, as though this singular incident of the ink-splash had not occurred at all, "Bai Jove! Do they take us for a lot of pick-pockets, or what?"

"Gentlemen, this very regretful incident is one which I deeply deplore"—it was the Photographic Artist who began to speak now, his manner suggesting a curious blend of extreme nervous haste and extreme deference—"but as I am expected in the matter of three other professional engagements this morning, I fear that I must ask you to excuse me now. I—er—in fact, it is highly necessary, I would

say, that I really must be going without further delay."

And the Artist gathered up his photographic oddments as he spoke. But, to his confusion, it appeared that no sort of attention was paid to the matter of his extremely polite remarks. The door-keepers fixed their regard upon the ceiling, and my friend the Sheikh was busy in a whispered conversation with his Excellency the Ambassador.

"Sir!" cried the Sheikh, suddenly wheeling round upon the Photographic Artist, "be not so hasty, I beg you. The loss we all deplore is a great one, but my Lord, his Excellency, is not a man of one jewel. Let us put it aside; and since you have the picture of his Excellency, who is a relation of mine, I beg you will now take one of me without delay. See, I stand!"

And my friend the Sheikh threw himself at once into a pose of really splendid defiance. Just so and not otherwise might a Moorish Emperor have received an ambassadorial petitioner from the infidels in the bad old days of that sainted butcher, Moulai Ismail, of bloody but revered memory in Morocco.

To my surprise the artistic value of the picture did not seem to appeal to Mr Montgomery. Indeed, it seemed at first he would not take the portrait, so he fussed and nervously insisted upon the value of his time, and the necessity for his immediate departure.

"You will take my portrait," said the Sheikh, quietly, but with exceeding masterfulness. And the Photographic Artist proceeded forthwith to arrange his camera in position.

"Thank you!" said he, mechanically, when the operation was completed.

"And now let me see the picture," demanded the Sheikh. And I was surprised at the ignorance he displayed, for I had once before had occasion to explain to him that photographs require development. Mr Montgomery naturally protested that there was as yet no picture to show.

"Natheless, I will see it," persisted Sheikh Abd el Majeed, walking threateningly toward the camera.

"Oh, come, you know, but that's absurd," put in Mr Jones, advancing upon the photographer's side. "You can't, you know, until it's developed."

"Do you refuse?" demanded the Sheikh, in stentorian tones, of the now hopelessly confused Photographic Artist.

"You see, my dear sir, it is impossible to show you now, and I really must be going. I think it is not a very good picture—indeed, that is to say—I—"

With one blow of his fist the Sheikh sent the camera flying off its stand, and before Mr Jones, who was indignantly running to the photographer's assistance, muttering something about a "benighted savage," could interfere, the Sheikh had effectually smashed the machine with his foot.

"Now get me my picture," said he, as though the breaking of the instrument made the immediate production of his portrait quite simple.

"I really cannot possibly wait—I must leave at once—I—"

The Photographic Artist showed a great deal of natural distress over the smashing of his instrument, and surprisingly little resentment, I thought, as he moved toward the door.

"Let no man leave this room," thundered old Abd er-Rahman.

So there we stood. Meantime, Mr Jones, an ardent photographer himself, had picked up the broken camera and was carefully examining it, with a view to determining the extent of its injuries, I supposed. Seeing this, the very embarrassed Mr Montgomery flew to his side and seized the fractured instrument quite jealously.

"Er—pray don't trouble!" said he, like Mr Toots. "It's of no consequence whatever, I assure you; it's not of the slightest consequence—er—it's not a very good camera."

"Indeed," said Mr Jones, "I quite thought it must be one of Stuhpelheit's new panoramic extensions when I saw how you managed that big group. I wish you'd let me have a look at it. What's the idea in that sort of sunken space under the back screw?"

"Oh, that is merely a flaw in—er— But I will explain it to you at my studio with pleasure. Perhaps you will call round—I—er—I really must—er—"

The Photographic Artist was obviously very much put about. I felt quite sympathetic for him.

"Let me see that," put in Sheikh Abd el Majeed, striding up to Mr Montgomery. "There I shall find my picture, perhaps."

"Indeed, sir, I assure you that it is not possible for your picture to—er—"

"You can't possibly see it, now you've stupidly smashed the thing, you know," said Mr Jones, speaking with feeling for a fellow-photographer, no doubt.

The Sheikh said nothing, but snatched the camera from the hands of the Photographic Artist, who, to

WAYSIDE ENTERTAINERS IN MOROCCO: A VERY OLD HAND AT THE GIMBRI

my astonishment, turned at once and fled wildly toward one of the doors. "He probably thinks now that he has fallen among savage cannibals at least," I thought, and walked after Mr Montgomery with a view to reassuring him. Hearing a shout behind me, I turned in time to see the Sheikh slit open the recess below the camera with the point of his dagger, thus exposing his Excellency's magnificent aigrette, or rather the Sultan's, neatly ensconced in cotton-wool.

Sidi Abd er-Rahman hoarsely demanded that the right hand and left foot of the Photographic Artist should at once be cut off, this being the method most approved in such circumstances in the realm of his Shareefian Lord and Master. I ventured to interpose here, for already two attendants had dragged the barely conscious Mr Montgomery to the side of his Excellency's cushions. I explained that we Britishers had a prejudice in favour of formal trial and sentence in these matters, and requested that a footman belonging to the house might at once be sent out for a police-officer.

After some rather fierce discussion, in the course of which his suspense seemed to weigh very heavily upon Mr Montgomery, this was done, and the artist, with his wonderful camera, his flowing but disarranged neck-tie, and his other belongings, was removed from our presence by a stalwart member of the Metropolitan force. We learned in the course of the week that Mr Montgomery was one of the most expert jewel thieves in Europe, an artist indeed, and one for whom the police were already anxiously looking in connection with another and a more successful robbery than the present one.

But I never quite got to the bottom of my

Sheikh's experiment with the ink-blot in the rosy hand of young Mr Jones. I gathered that it was the Moorish form of crystal-gazing, and the Sheikh said he had enabled Mr Jones, by hypnotism, to see the whole theft in the ink-blot. But whatever the process the Sheikh certainly managed the matter very ably, as we all agreed. And he now wears a very handsome silver-sheathed dagger, with a big emerald in its haft, sent him by the Sultan after the story reached Morocco.

THE SHEIKH AND THE GREAT NORTHERN

WE of the West, with our wireless telegraphy, and our Science in Snippets for the multitude, are apt to think that we have said the last word and thought the last thought in most matters. We are apt to forget, too, that many of our most wonderful and well-trumpeted discoveries were matters of common knowledge many centuries ago to folk whose cuticle is different from ours and whom we regard as savages. I suppose this is an integral fibre of our wholesome British pride, and of that royal confidence in ourselves which alone makes it possible for us to dominate a very large share of the earth's surface. So far, so good. But the under-rating of the powers of the "savages" and "semi-savages" is a little misleading, and involves an occasional shock of surprise for us.

Now, take the matter of hypnotism. I fancied that Paris and London knew all that was worth knowing about that subject. I don't think so now. I found, for example, in Morocco, that pretty nearly every Moor one met with knew as much about mesmerism, in practice if not in theory, as do any of the professing exponents of the art, or science, or whatever you call it, in Europe. It was my friend, Sheikh Abd el Majeed, who opened my eyes to this, as to a good many other matters of interest. He

heard me one day in Tangier instructing a groom in the matter of a sick horse.

"And mind," said I to the groom, "don't you leave the stable till I return. No loafing down to Bab el Fàs *café*, mind. Be sure I shall see you if you go out. You stay right here till I get back."

Of course the man promised, and equally, of course, I suspect he strolled down to the city gate *café*, or to some other centre of gossip, as soon as my back was turned.

"Why does the Sidi think he would see his servant in the town if his servant desired not to be seen?" asked Sheikh Abd el Majeed.

"Why? Because I mean to keep my eyes open, of course," was my innocent English reply.

"H'm! And does the Sidi suppose that he could see me in the town if I wished him not to see me?"

I indicated my readiness to wager that I would if the Sheikh were within eye-shot from the public streets; and then it was that my friend explained to me the every-day uses to which hypnotism is put in Morocco. I confess I had my doubts about it.

"Where does the Sidi ride this evening?" asked the Sheikh.

"By Bubanah, and home through Shwaanee and along the beach," said I.

"Good! Let the Sidi look for me along the beach, within half a mile of the town," said the Sheikh, in his confoundedly superior way, as it might be he was humouring some sceptical child.

"He'll have to shrink into something mighty small if I am not to see him on that beach," I thought. And accordingly, as soon as I reached the sands on my homeward way, I slowed my stallion

down to a walk and made up my mind to scrutinise carefully every soul I passed upon the beach.

But I saw no sign of Sheikh Abd el Majeed. In fact, I only met about a score of people altogether. Close to the corner where one turns for the hill road to the Sôk, I caught sight of Trefane, the Danish consul, and pulled up alongside him for a chat.

"You haven't seen anything of Sheikh Abd el Majeed, my new familiar, have you?" I asked after the usual salutations.

"Isn't that the man sitting there by those nets?" said he.

As I hope to be forgiven, the Sheikh was sitting within fifty yards of us. I had just passed him. Trefane said the Sheikh had certainly sat there without moving during the last ten minutes, for he himself had been looking out for the Gibraltar steamer during that time, and had seen the Sheikh all the while. And I had looked into the face of every single person I saw on that beach.

"But that is nothing at all," said the Sheikh, afterwards. "Any street idler might do so much—just prevent your seeing him. It is easy to prevent your seeing a thing that is; where skill comes is in making you see a thing which is not."

But all this is a shocking digression (though not without purpose), for I want to tell you about my cousin, Harry Forbes, and how the Sheikh helped him in England.

You would probably know almost as much about Harry as I do if I gave his real name, since a young man may not run through a fortune of three-quarters of a million, and pick himself up again, without attracting a good deal of attention. But for obvious

reasons I refrain from using Harry's real second name. Therefore you will think of him, if you please, as a young man of twenty-six whose mother had died when he was a child, and whose father, who died when Harry was twenty-three, had left him close upon eight hundred thousand pounds in good securities, a small annuity so wisely tied up that it could not be disposed of, and Itchet Park. Itchet Park was a fine inheritance in itself; a fine old mansion, built in the reign of the first George, and one of the finest parks in the north of England. But Harry had started business as a patron of the turf, even before his father died; and—well, you know, the turf demands a good deal of its young patrons. The youngster had not done so badly, from the sporting point of view, and there is no doubt he knew a horse when he saw one. His training stables contained some very fine animals, and they did a good deal of winning for him. But Harry's head for figures was not remarkable, and it seemed he could never resist the temptation to plunge in betting. Standing to win a thousand seemed a poor sort of business to Harry. He must needs go out and double and treble his wagers before the thought of them gave him an atom of satisfaction. Yet he had his occasional fits of caution and remorse; and when a horse of Harry's won it frequently brought nothing in its owner's pocket to balance his very heavy losses on previous races.

When Harry asked me to go and spend a week at Itchet Park, and see him win the Great Northern Handicap, I asked permission to bring Sheikh Abd el Majeed with me, knowing that the Moor would be intensely interested in the racing, and being anxious to show him something of what Englishmen could do

with horses. Harry wrote back welcoming us both—"And anyone else you like to bring. There's heaps of room, and plenty of grub — at present. And there will be heaps more when Starlight has passed the judge's box on Tuesday."

So I was prepared to learn that my cousin had been plunging again; but it was not until the night before the great race that I realised how deeply.

Sheikh Abd el Majeed was, as I had foreseen, deeply interested in Harry's stables, where, as guests of honour, we were admitted on the evening of our arrival at Itchet Park, to see the horses and be introduced to Starlight, the red-hot favourite for the Great Northern. I think I never saw a more beautiful animal in my life, and his condition was superb. Trained to the last turn of concert pitch, Starlight was a ruddy bay model of what a racehorse should be; satin-coated and thighed like an ostrich; a mass of muscle and nerves, he chewed the edge of his manger while the Sheikh ran one sensitive hand down the sinewy pasterns and stroked the gleaming flank. The mere appearance of the beast in his beautifully-kept box conveyed a wonderfully strong impression of lightning speed, tireless endurance, and ability to spring to the gallop as an arrow leaves a bow.

"Y'Allah t'if!" exclaimed the Sheikh, in deep-breathing admiration. "What a horse!"

And the jealous stable-boy, whose bed was in the next box, glanced at Abd el Majeed as though fearful lest some fateful charm had been pronounced over the creature whose care was this lad's religion. But Harry Forbes understood and warmed to the Moor.

"Yes; he's a beauty, isn't he?" said Harry, drawing his rug over Starlight's haunches. "And he's going to set me straight with the world on Tuesday. Nothing can stop him—unless it's Wilson's Jason, and—"

"If ye please, sir, our Starlight can leave 'im standing!" The stable-boy would have fought anyone else but his master who had ventured upon the expression of even so much doubt, I fancied.

I have my doubts as to whether the Sheikh ever enjoyed anything in England as he enjoyed that first day's racing of the Great Northern meeting on Monday. Harry passed us everywhere, even to the weighing-room, and the Sheikh studied English racing from the inside, as the saying is, in the saddling-paddock, and among the jockeys and grooms. He was presented to the famous jockey who was to ride Starlight on the morrow, and to his equally famous compeer who was to steer the second favourite, Jason. He talked earnestly and humbly with both, learning with every step he took and every word he heard. He was shown the judge's box, walked over the course, and was instructed in the details of the management of races.

Starlight was not running that day, but Jason was; and when the Sheikh had examined the second favourite he confided to me with a sigh that he had had no idea there would be other horses so fit to ride against my cousin's Starlight.

"But, to be sure, to win even by the breadth of my hand is sufficient?" said he.

"Ay, or of thy finger," I agreed; and that seemed to comfort him.

It was late that night, in the smoking-room, when

the rest of his guests had gone to bed, that Harry told me just what the next day's race would mean for him. The Sheikh squatted on a cushion beside us, smoking Bastos cigarettes, and was no barrier to my cousin's confidence. I suppose they joined hands in their mutual love of a good horse. In any case I had seen that the Sheikh was more drawn toward Harry than he had been toward any other man to whom I had introduced him. And Harry met his advances, and seemed to reciprocate his feelings most heartily.

"Thundering good chap, your Sheikh," said he to me; "and as for being a darkey, as that fool said on the course to-day—why, he's no more of a darkey than I am! He's got a devilish sharp eye for a horse, and I'm glad to find he admires Star as much as he does. I never saw a man handle a horse more understandingly. Old Star would have let the Sheikh sit between his hoofs; and he won't stand liberties from most folk, either. He won't from me, I know."

I explained to Harry that your Moor was, so to say, born a-horseback, and that horse-lore was hereditary among Arabs. And then we fell to talk of Harry's circumstances. I knew he had plighted his troth to a Miss Dighton; one of the Leicestershire Dightons, who, as everyone knows, are as poor as church mice. My people had tried to put obstacles in the way, for, from the worldly point of view, a more unwise match could hardly be conceived; but neither they nor I understood just how unwise it was.

"What do you think I stand to win on Starlight to-morrow?" said Harry, reflectively, chewing the end of his cigar.

"Ten thousand," said I, knowing his plunging habits.

"Ten thousand—on the Great Northern Handicap! Why, I lost more than that last week. No, my son, Starlight's got to win nearly two hundred thousand for me to-morrow; and what's more, if he doesn't win it I sha'n't have a stick or stone to call my own after next settling-day, bar the little annuity that poor Dad tied up so deuced tight that I couldn't raise eighteenpence on it."

I stared. "Two hundred thousand—and Starlight's at six to four on!"

"Well, of course, I did better than that. I didn't make my book yesterday, though I'm bound to say the odds were confoundedly tight about Star from the very start. His Newmarket win fixed that—and didn't bring me a thousand pounds, confound it!"

There was silence between us for a few minutes, and, watching Harry's face, the conviction was borne in upon me that this race was no ordinary plunge for him, but a matter of life and death. The sporting element of it was lost, clean out of sight; it was not just a win or a loss, it was a win or ruin, for my cousin, and the shadow of it was heavy upon his face. He seemed to read my thoughts, for, presently, he laid one hand upon my shoulder, and his voice broke a little as he said to me,—

"By God, old man, I tell you Star has just got to win this time or you'll never hear of me any more. This week has been almost more than I could stand. If anything went wrong there wouldn't be enough left to settle my bills with. If all's well, and Star wins—Phew! I'm clear. I should be married in a month, and—yes, I shall be done with racing for good and all. If Star's beaten—it means the Colonies, or a bullet for me!"

"Iyeh, by Allah, but Star will win!" said the Sheikh, quietly, and touching Harry's knee with one hand.

I had forgotten the Sheikh, and so, for the moment, I think, had Harry.

"Thanks, Sheikh, thanks! I hope he will, I'm sure," said Harry. "Have some more coffee?"

The Sheikh declined the coffee and rose to leave us for the night. "But make you no trouble in your mind," said he, earnestly, to Harry. "I have said it; by Allah, the Star shall win!" And with that he left us.

"He's a good chap, your Sheikh," said Harry to me; "but—but I suppose my nerves are a bit jumpy, or something. I declare he made me shiver just now; talking like that, as though he were a sort of Providence and could make horses win or lose as he liked. I tell you the strain of this thing is more than a man can stand. I've grown old in the last week, and a fellow has to keep a stiff upper lip among racing men, and with guests in the house, too. Lord! Lord! What would the dear old pater have said to the ownership of Itchet Park hanging on a horse-race?"

"But, look here, Harry, can't you hedge?" I said. "Couldn't you lay off some of it on Jason, in case of accidents?"

"Oh, well, if you talk of accidents, what's to prevent an outsider romping home?"

I sighed. But the thought of what a disaster for Harry failure would mean possessed me, and I stuck to the hedging idea so closely that before we parted for the night he had agreed to see what could be done next morning in the matter of laying off a few hundreds of pounds upon Jason.

"Bar accidents," he said, "Jason's the only horse. I fear. But he—well, if what Wilson tells me is true, Jason ought to just about beat Star on the post. It's that that's made me old this week. I ought to have hedged as soon as I knew what Jason had done in his trial last week; but old Star—well, I don't know. I didn't anyhow!"

But I had Harry's promise for the morning, and comforted myself with that as I turned in for the night.

But my comfort was stripped from me when we started for the course next morning. (The distance was no more than three miles, and Harry's horses were always taken by road.) My cousin had made the poorest sort of pretence at breaking his fast, and now, though with his high colour and bright eyes he looked well enough to the casual observer, he seemed to me to be in a high fever of excitement. When we mounted the Itchet drag Harry declined to take the ribbons, and I knew his nerves must be in a pretty bad state when he felt unfit to handle his own team.

"I'm right off hedging," he muttered to me as we started. "After all, it's a snivelling sort of business. I'd rather stand or fall. Star deserves so much; by gad! I'll not hedge a penny piece!"

The Sheikh's learning had not carried him far enough to understand what was meant by hedging, but he nodded his approval at Harry, and said, in his quiet, impressive way, "Star will win; I have said it!" It was not like him, I thought, to make confident assertions without having some ground to base them on. Could he really know, from his examination of the two horses most concerned? At all events, I envied him his confidence.

"Now we must just go and say good-morning to Starlight and wish him luck," said Harry, when he reached the saddling-paddock gate. "Come along, Sheikh, and give our horse your blessing!"

"First, I want you to let me see Jason and that boy with the old man's face who is to ride him," said the Sheikh. "Then I will say 'B'ism Illah' over the Star."

Harry laughed nervously. "All right," he said. "But don't be killing Jason's jock for the love you bear Starlight, Sheikh, for that wouldn't win our race for us."

"Nay," said the Sheikh, gravely, as one who should protest he had never injured a fly; "there is to be no killing here; there is no need of killing, but only of racing. And—the Star, he is to win."

Jason's wizened jockey, the hero of a thousand victories, shook hands with Sheikh Abd el Majeed with great good humour. What the little man did not know about horses and racing was not very well worth knowing, and it was his conviction that he was to ride the winner of the Great Northern that day.

"There is a little black—there—so!" Delicately the Sheikh had touched the famous jockey's forehead with the forefinger of his slim right hand. The jockey acknowledged the attention a little awkwardly, I thought, and his eyes fell in a shamefaced way from the Sheikh's face.

"So you are riding to—to win to-day, hey?" said the Sheikh.

"Er—what? Why, yes," said the jockey. It was very odd, I thought, the way in which the words seemed to be forced from him, as humility might be forced from a bully.

"Ah—ye-es!" said the Sheikh, slowly. "But sometimes—how you say it? In my country we say success is never so far as when the finger-tips touch it. Between the touch and the grasp—you understand—Nay, nay; there is no need of words. I wish you—strength, Sahhah!"

It was an irritating way to talk to a jockey just before his race, I thought, and I was quite surprised that the man stood it so quietly; to be sure, he looked sullen and resentful enough, but he stepped forward briskly as a stable-boy in hopes of a tip when the Sheikh asked him some trivial question.

The first two races excited no great attention, but betting was brisk on the big event of the day, and before the horses were led out for their preliminary canter Starlight had given place to Jason as first favourite. It was as though Harry's nervousness had communicated itself to the public; and certainly their loss of faith in Starlight had its effect upon poor Harry. The poor fellow only kept outward control of himself by a prodigious effort, and when I spoke to him, begged me in a whisper to ask him nothing till the race was run.

"Keep near me, old man. By gad! it's more than I can stand. What the devil can have put them off old Star like this? They're giving three to one about him. By gad! I'll have another hundred on him, hang me if I won't!"

And he did, despite all my arguments against it.

"Peace! peace!" murmured the Sheikh in my ear. "The Star shall win. I have said it."

The crowd yelled their cheers as the two favourites minced past the grand stand together after the canter. Harry, the Sheikh, myself, and a few others of

Harry's party secured places close to the rails next the judge's box. We were within a few yards of the fateful post itself. From this you will know, if you know the Great Northern course, that we had a very fair view of the starting-place, and a perfect view of the best straight in England. The first and the last half-mile of the race would be a panorama for us; but we were too low to see much of the intervening three-quarters of a mile.

"They're off!" shouted the crowd, and the book-makers suddenly ceased from troubling. Silence fell upon the great course and the multitude that hemmed it in. It was a fine start. First came two outsiders whose names I did not know; then a raw, leggy chestnut, very fast but no stayer for that distance, I thought; then Starlight, stretching comfortably in an inside position with Jason a good length in the rear, and half-hidden by the ruck. A splendid field, and— Already they were out of sight.

All the colour had left Harry's face now, and he looked ten years more than his age as he turned half round to watch the faces on the stand for indications of the progress of the race.

"Tum-tum! tut-sah!" he was muttering to himself; and every other moment his tongue moved to moisten his dry lips, whilst his left hand crushed a cigar, and his right fore-finger and thumb jerked at the end of his moustache. The Sheikh leaned upon the rails, his eyes glued upon that quarter of the course from which the horses entered the straight and our range of vision.

"Starlight leads!"

The crowd roared itself hoarse as the field

appeared again, and I heard Harry, craning his head behind me, take in his breath with a gulp.

"The sport of kings is mighty wearing to some commoners," I thought.

There was no sort of doubt but that the race was between the two favourites. The public were so far right. Starlight and Jason entered the half-mile straight a length and a half ahead of the field, which was bunched thickly; and Starlight was three-quarters of a length in advance of Jason. We could hear the thunder of their hoofs now. I saw Tom Gunner's whip rise over Starlight's flank.

"Too soon! Too soon!" groaned Harry behind me.

Jason was creeping steadily on. His nose reached Tom Gunner's knee, and passed it. They were neck and neck, and there they stayed through a little eternity. The crowd gasped.

"Starlight! Jason! Starlight! Jason!"

The tension was horribly acute. Tom Gunner's whip was going like a flail. And now I saw the whip of Jason's jockey rise and fall once, twice. The grey crept forward. There was no doubt about it. "Jason wins!" yelled the crowd. Jason was a neck and a half ahead, and the whip had barely spoken to him yet. On they came, the earth shaking under them, Jason winning by a quarter of his length. The Sheikh, leaning far over the rails, was muttering away in Arabic during the whole of this time. Suddenly his voice rose, almost to a shout.

"Drook!"—that is, "Now!"—was the word that left him; and his two corn-coloured hands, palms outward, shot out before me like unleashed hawks. "Racecourses are no places for you, my friend,"

thought I. And then I thought no more of that, for the great roar that went up from the crowd assembled on that course drowned thought.

"Starlight! Starlight wins!"

It was really most extraordinary. I saw the jockey's shoulders twitch, and I could almost have sworn he jagged at Jason's mouth. Certainly the favourite's stride shortened. Starlight's blood-red nostrils were level with his nostrils. They shot past. They were at the post; Starlight a good head and neck in advance, the ruck of the field thundering after them, Harry Forbes shaking both my hands, in tremulous fashion, and—the Great Northern Handicap was run and won.

A few minutes later we were in the saddling-paddock, the Sheikh and myself, to welcome Harry as he led the winner in, to the accompaniment of deafening applause from the crowd. A rasping voice behind me made me turn to look at those who accompanied the second horse, the beaten favourite.

"But, God in heaven, man, you simply pulled up!"

It was Wilson, the owner of Jason, addressing the most sourly crestfallen jockey in England, who, for his part, had not a word to say in his defence; though I heard later that in the weighing-room he was heard savagely to grunt out a statement to the effect that he believed he had been bewitched.

It was not till several days later that I was able to get anything out of Sheikh Abd el Majeed on the subject; and then he only said,—

"It is not so easy, Sidi, to make a man do things as to prevent him seeing you; but with a little care, a little practice, we Moors can do a good deal with what you call mesmerism."

In my heart I knew perfectly well that Jason could have won that race, and would have won it, but for the Sheikh's exercise of will-power upon the jockey. It may have been my duty to have explained this to the stewards; but — should I have been thanked, or called a lunatic? And then there was Harry; it was fortune or ruin for him. What would you have done?

Anyhow, I have told what happened, and I know that it was not Starlight, but Sheikh Abd el Majeed, who won the Great Northern Handicap that year.

A week before Harry was married to Miss Dighton he told the Sheikh he wanted to make him a present.

"Somehow, I believe it was your blessing made old Star win, Sheikh. Now what can I give you?"

The Sheikh smiled. He knew.

"Your blessing, friend, that I, too, may win," said he.

And, in addition to the blessing, Harry gave the Sheikh the best hunter in his stables.

THE ROYAL NAVY OF MOROCCO

THERE was once an American boy, the son of a Chicago millionaire, and this boy was domiciled at an English public school. He was a millionaire in his own right, from the standpoint of his English school-mates. One of his whims, the most grievous among many, was to purchase costly, delicate and highly intricate mechanical contrivances, apparently with the aim of showing how quickly he could tire of them, and, having tired of them, destroy the beautiful, complex things by leaving them lying about in playgrounds, by sitting on them, and by other apeish and unpleasing devices. Now, at this same school was an English boy whose loving interest in mechanical contrivances amounted to a passion. Financially this inventor in embryo was the poorest boy in the school. On a certain sunny summer afternoon this lad fell upon the American youth and came near to slaying him with a cricket stump, over the rusted ruins of an exquisite little model engine which the rich boy was kicking in sunder. When he was healed of his wounds and whole once more, one found that the episode had exerted a most beneficial effect upon the destructively-inclined young millionaire.

I inspected the Moorish armoured cruiser, *Bashir*, the other day[1] and I was filled with a desire to turn

[1] In the spring of 1901. The Sultan sold his costly toy last year.

that English boy loose, *with his stump*, among the Moorish authorities responsible for the purchase and subsequent maltreatment of this costly, delicate and highly intricate mechanical contrivance. But there! The poor lad's heart would break when, after interminable stump-wielding, he found, as find he would, that no power on earth could amend the chastised ones or preserve from ultimate ruination their toy.

You must know that for quite a number of years past there has been a Moorish navy. I am not referring, of course, to the "saleemans," xebecs and caravels of the palmy Moorish days of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but to this present age of the Moorish empire's decay. This navy consisted of two small merchant steamers, purchased from Europe—*Sid et Turki* of 385 tons' register, and *Al Hassanee* of 1000 tons. These little steamers, each carrying a few guns, have made Tangier Bay their head-quarters, are captained and officered by German merchant seamen, and have been used principally for the conveying of grain and stores to and from coast towns in Morocco when not occupied in the transport of prisoners or of the pickled heads of rebels. This latter task is an important branch of the Moorish naval service, which, one is pleased to say, led to the resignation, after ineffectual protestations, of the only Englishmen employed in it.

Early in the decade just ended the Italian embassy in Tangier proceeded on a mission to the Moorish Court in the interior. Among other matters then pressed upon the Sultan (the father of the present ruler) it is said that he was invited to order a modern armoured cruiser to be built for him in an Italian dockyard at a cost of something under

£100,000. The vessel could be used as a royal yacht for the conveyance of Allah's Anointed, the then prince Abd el Aziz, on his pilgrimage to Holy Mekka. At all events a member of the Italian Embassy remained for close on eighteen months at the Court, and, as a reward for his diplomatic patience, at the end of that time returned to Tangier with an order for Italy in his hand for a modern 1100-ton armoured cruiser. This cruiser, the *Bashir*, was built in 1894, in the Fratelli Orlando dockyard at Leghorn, and a bill was presented to the Sultan for an amount between £80,000 and £90,000. The cruiser was to be manned for the most part by Italians.

Then began the complications—the Legation complications, which are the inevitable stumbling-block in the way of any new departure, progressive or otherwise, in this distressful country. All the other Powers, with a smile and a bow for Italy, turned frowningly upon the Sultan and began to rend him upon the question of cruisers. Each one demanded, like an eager bagman, an order such as Italy had obtained. "Plague take the thing and the whole accursed tribe of Nazarenes!" one imagines the Sultan saying. What he openly said was, in effect, "Very well, then, I won't take the Italian cruiser and I won't pay for it. Perhaps that will content you other fellows."

A certain number of Moors had entered the Italian navy to be trained. They were left there, and the Sultan, doubtless with relief, washed his sacred hands of the whole affair. The Powers fell back and dozed again; and Italy commenced a treatment of quarterly pin-prickings, in the shape of reminders that their order had been completed, the

goods, according to sample, were ready for delivery, and a settlement of account by return would oblige. The Moorish Government, from long habit, are inured to this kind of thing, and can bear up under it quite singularly well. They bore up, the Sultan and his Wazeers, until the former died. The virtue of patient endurance descended with the Imperial Parasol, it seemed, to his son, the present Right Hand of Allah upon earth. And the cruiser remained at Leghorn.

Objecting, naturally, to the unbusiness-like practice of keeping ordered stock indefinitely on hand, Italy, so to say, dropped in, in a friendly way, upon the other Powers, and requested them to let up and spoil sport no longer. "Very well," said the other Powers at length, over their Chianti, shall we say, "You send in your goods and get a settlement; but, mark this, on the distinct understanding that you don't let it occur again, and that no Power interested in Morocco shall allow its subjects to man the cruiser?"

So, at long last, the cruiser steamed away from Leghorn for Tangier Bay, where she dropped anchor in the autumn of 1900. The Moors who had been trained in the Italian navy were aboard her, but could not handle the vessel. So she was brought here by Italians, who departed from her, according to agreement, when she reached Moorish waters. The cruiser, a beautiful yacht-like little vessel, being securely moored, a crew was appointed by the Tangier authorities, and the *Bashir* was handed over to its tender mercies. The newly-appointed paymaster (in Moorish affairs the paymaster is always the real master) had never before trod a ship's deck, I am informed. The Moorish gentlemen of Italian naval

training came ashore in all the glory of Italian naval uniform slightly modified, and proceeded to their respective homes in the interior. In a few weeks they made one task of the doffing of civilisation and of the clothing of civilisation. It was marvellous. They sloughed six years' training and environment in the time it took them to discard their gold-braided coats; and they stepped back into present-day, decadent Moorish barbarity while donning the djellab, kaftan and yellow slippers of the Faithful.

Meantime, the sylph-like *Bashir* accumulated barnacles and a fine coating of briny rust in Tangier Bay. It was decided to change her position a little. *She had to be towed* from one anchorage to the other. That rather riled Morocco—proud of its new toy—and accordingly an English engineer was engaged and sent aboard her, to put the "steam devil business' in order. This good man is said to have wept when he ended his first inspection of engines which had left Italy a few months earlier in perfect order. He probably wept further when he set to work to remedy the evils resulting from lazy ignorance and neglect. Work that he ordered Mohammed to put through was shruggingly delegated to Cassim, who lit a cigarette and bade Absalaam see to it, proceeding then to conversation with Absalaam, who recommended Hamadi to the task, and invited him to smoke whilst Achmet, the head of my unfortunate compatriot's gang, entertained them all with the story of his uncle's wife's sister's marriage with a kaid from Al Ksar el Kebeer. In this pleasing manner the days passed, whilst the beautiful *Bashir* lay rotting at her anchorage, and tears and perspiration oozed from the Christian engineer. At length he came ashore, a saddened and ex-

hausted man, and resigned his post; for which piece of honesty all credit is due to him.

The *Bashir* possessed a steam pinnace. It fell from its davitts, filled and sank in eight to ten fathoms of water. I asked a Moorish naval officer about this. "Oh, that's all right," he told me. "*We know where it is!*" and he smiled blandly. Amazing person! That was just three months after the pinnace descended to the floor of Tangier Bay.

An English naval officer from Gibraltar was invited to offer himself as captain of the *Bashir*. He was taken over the cruiser to inspect it. After some trouble, and hunting in odd, out-of-the-way corners, the key of the ammunition and powder magazine was discovered, and a Moor, a deck hand, led the Englishman into the magazine, *carrying a naked light* to show him the way withal.

The key of this place? Oh, the paymaster had that, and he was ashore. Of the other place? It was with the lieutenant, who was engaged at cards in the forecastle with the men. It appeared that the ship had already some seven or eight commanders, of whom the paymaster was the chief, and all of whom would be above and beyond the Christian captain's authority.

Presently, when it seemed that the *Bashir* really was at length to be captained and officered by Englishmen, an official reminder was issued of the tacit understanding among the Powers to the effect that the cruiser was not to be officered by Europeans. At once the English withdrew. Immediately, then, the captaincy and engineers' berths were offered to Germans, and by them accepted. These were the gentlemen who very hospitably

received me when I inspected the Moorish navy. The attitude of the English in this little piece of jugglery, by the way, is quite singularly typical of the English attitude in Morocco generally—as theirs is of the German.

There was not half a pound of paint aboard the cruiser. There was not the wherewithal to get up sufficient steam with which to heave anchor. She had not stores enough for a Thames ferry-boat. She had nothing, save her beautiful, rotting hull, her beautiful, rotting fixtures, and her beautiful, rotting engines. Conning tower, torpedo tube (but no torpedoes), search-light apparatus, four 100 mm. Vavasour pivot guns (from Newcastle), six small quick-firers, two field-guns—every intricate modern appliance this cruiser had, and all were left to rust and decay as Allah and the elements so willed.

The men ate, and spilled, their food on the decks, they smoked all day long and all over the ship; discipline was unknown among them, and they were entirely without sense, or hours, of duty. They squatted about in the Sultan's satin-upholstered and gorgeously-decorated quarters. "The Sultan has plenty of money," they said; "and then, no Sultan would ever go on board a ship."

A pathetic object was the Moorish man-of-war. (I was quite pleased to learn the other day that she had been sold.)

THE FEAST OF THE SHEEP

IT is on the cards that you have never witnessed or taken part in the Moorish annual Feast of the Sheep. It fell during the first months of one of my early visits to Tangier. Let me give you my notes, as they stand, of the impression I received of it then.

. . . . . .

That I should have forgotten the festival after being forewarned regarding it was a piece of culpable negligence on my part. That I was not reminded of it by the prodigious number of sheep to be seen abroad, about the streets and market-places, slung upon donkeys, tethered under shadowy archways, and borne upon men's shoulders—Morocco is for ever stirring one with misty hails from one's childhood's study of pictures in the family Bible—this is a circumstance for which I can offer no reason or excuse.

During a couple of days I had noticed a sort of restless expectancy about the demeanour of my good rascal, Selaam Marrakshi. Last night this uneasiness seemed to approach a climax, and, callous Nazarene that I was, I inquired carelessly as to its cause.

"Have you been eating too much kesk'soo, Selaam, or smoking too much kief?"

"No, sir, I don' to smoke kief now, an' I don' to eat kesk'soo these ten an' four days." A pregnant pause, compact of injured innocence and reproach. "Ghadda (to-morrow) he's Feast of Sheep, sir!"

"God bless my soul, you don't say so! And you

no got sheep, and no new slippers, what? Come along, Selaam; we'll go to Sôk."

So, with a sigh of relief, the rascal rose from his heels and followed me out along the moonlit beach, and up by the stony hill road to Tangier's market-place, where, among the tiny bazaars, Selaam was saluted by friends innumerable, the most of whom glanced in surprise at his distinctly maculate slippers; some of whom asked, railingly, if his sheep were fat yet and ready for the pot. It seemed my forgetfulness was known.

The bright, new, lemon-coloured, red-soled slippers we soon acquired from an obese dignitary, in orange and mauve satin, who was doing a thriving trade in these commodities, at famine prices, among foolish virgins like ourselves who had tarried over long and left the making of these all-important purchases to the very eve of the Feast day itself. In the matter of a sheep we were not so easily suited. Every second man we met seemed to have one of the bleating creatures about his person, either on his shoulders, in his arms, or dragging behind him on a cord. But our quest was a man with two of them; for such a person might sell, while the man with but one, so it appeared, had forfeited Paradise and given a Sultan the go-by rather than part with his next day's mutton.

At length we happened on a certain Shareef of our acquaintance, a minor saint, with three sheep and a keen nose for a bargain. We took seats beside this holy chafferer and commenced a long discussion upon "heaven and date-stones." Long time we gossiped over coffee and snuff before Selaam ventured, very casually, on a question as to the value of the meanest among the three tethered sheep.

"That! Oh, eight dollars and a half is his price. And so the Sultan has really called our Basha to Marrakish. Y'Allah t'if! And how the world wags on!"

It was cleverly done, and the yawn with which the remark ended was a miracle of listless, holiday indifference. But we bought that sheep, Selaam and I, and that for a shade less than half the amount first mentioned by our holy friend, Shareef Achmet. And, having bought the creature, we devoted the next hour or so of that moonshiny night to getting our purchase home. Awhile Selaam carried it about his neck, a bleating boa, one pair of legs over either shoulder. Wearying of this we returned our mutton to earth, and tried twisting its woolly tail as a means of encouraging it toward our home and its place of translation. Ultimately, and by the pale light of a now declining moon, we crossed the hotel terrace, each holding, wheel-barrow fashion, a hind-leg of our sheep, the which we thus urged onward upon its propping and unwilling fore-feet.

Where the sheep passed the night I cannot say. I plead guilty to having deserted Selaam upon the hotel terrace, where, for aught I know, he may have trundled the bleating, imbecile creature to and fro till morning. A retiring disposition forced me within doors (within back-doors, to be exact) what time Selaam navigated his sheep past the entrance. Among mine own people I was reluctant to give prominence to my connection with our sheep.

Next morning, as I stood talking to a Spanish lady, a sudden, furious bleating made me aware that the wretched creature, anticipating the cook's knife, was endeavouring to hang itself on a palmetto cord

by which it had been tethered to a balustrade. I felt myself positively blushing. I declined to recognise the beast, and endeavoured to draw my companion away when Selaam came, scurrying, to the suicide's rescue. I effusively concurred with the Spanish lady's comment upon the foolishness of allowing country Moors to tether their animals about the hotels. I could have slain Selaam when, a moment later, he approached us, smirking, with,—

"That our sheep, sir, he near to die; he goin' to be hang, only I come quick!" And I had been getting on so nicely with my laborious little Spanish gallantries.

It is a queer business, this Feast of the Sheep. The only thing about it which is definitely known and understood would appear to be the interesting facts that it comes once a year, and that it is an occasion of peace-making and over-eating. Four aged and respected expounders of Alkoran, long in the beard and of great piety, have assured me that the Feast commemorates that great trial of Abraham's faith in which Isaac came near to a most unpleasant end. Three other mubasheers, with beards of almost equal reverence, scout this explanation as smacking of Jewry; not Abraham, but a friend of Mohammed, say these gentlemen, originated the Feast. Selaam assures me that when he was a boy the teaching was that the plagues of Egypt were at the bottom of the Sheep Feast. Finally, an Arabic scholar tells me that if I question one thousand Moorish observers of the Feast, some five of them may be able to tell me what it commemorates. For his part my learned friend supports the Abraham explanation.

However, leaving these abstruse questions to the

long-bearded, you have my word for it that it is a great tumasha, this Feast of the Sheep; and that, if I know anything of my man, his over-burdened digestive organs will insist upon a banan day to-morrow. With my hand upon my heart I can assure you that he has this day personally disposed of well-nigh half a sheep, besides other small matters of confectionery and several gallons of syrupy green tea, with fresh mint in it, and sugar past all reckoning. A full and pious Muslim is Selaam Marrakshi this night; but particularly and with emphasis is he a full Muslim. If there be one that is fuller, in El Moghreb, then I should be glad to meet the man, and—sorry to carry him.

But with regard to the function: At half-past six this morning I was roused by Selaam with a round-about request for the loan of my rifle, of his relationship to which he is tremendously proud, magazine rifles being as yet rare in the Sultan's dominions. Subsequently, I was grateful to notice that my horse had been given a superlatively fine grooming. That was my innocence, Another roundabout request left me without a horse for this morning. Selaam had borrowed the animal, and had produced, for its further ornamentation, a gorgeous crimson, green and gold saddle, high-peaked before and behind, and of most elaborate workmanship. My own saddle was unobtrusively cinched upon a hired screw, held near by by a ragged *protégé* of Selaam's.

Selaam's pate was new shaven, the tassel of his new tarboosh was nearer a foot than six inches in length, his yellow Moorish riding-boots were new-embroidered in crimson silk, a yard and a half of dark blue bernous trailed behind him on the breeze; my gun

was at his hip, his features radiated a shining dignity, and my horse was fretted and pricked into a diagonal progress consisting of short prancing caracoles. Oh, it was a brave show! My preceding it on the tame, hired nag suggested a groom who had forgotten his place. So, presently, I withdrew; not to put too fine a point upon it, I trotted meekly away by a side street, and so mounted alone to the outer Sôk, leaving Selaam, a procession in himself, to join his fellow-believers on the Kasbah hill, where the Basha would presently initiate the day's proceedings.

For myself, I waited in the market-place among Jew sweetmeat pedlars and other perspiring infidels. You must understand that the great m'sallah, or enclosed praying field of Tangier, stands beside the British Legation, on the crest of the market-place hill, well without the city walls and Bab el Fás their principal gate. The chief mosque, on the other hand, is within the walls, at the city's lowest extremity, near the beach, and at the foot of the steep main street. While I spurred my reluctant hack about among the Sôk pedlars and holiday-making Moors, new-shaven, new-shod and new-scrubbed withal, I perceived that, for the present, attention centred upon the m'sallah on the hilltop. Clean and pious Believers, themselves in white, their children garbed in material of every hue seen in rainbows, formed a constant, slow-moving stream from the town to the m'sallah.

Presently, with a flourish of drums and horns, a huge banner of the Prophet's own green appeared under the arch of Bab el Fás;—The Holy Shareef of Wazzan, Moulai Ali, by Allah's wonder-working grace, a lineal child of Mohammed—and of an English mother, who was married to the late Saint of Wazzan

in the British Legation—his banner. The Shareef and his train made a gallant show; white horses, peaked saddles, gilt stirrups, and green and gold trappings, fluttering. Women crooned their shrill acclamations, men pressed forward among the Shareef's armed runners to kiss his sacred stirrups —and others shrugged, smiled, and stared, indifferent. Every man has his following in Morocco. Diplomatic France has made a *protégé* of this young Shareef, and so Algerian soldiers from the Legation formed part of Moulai Ali's train on this occasion.

More drum-beating, and—incongruously enough in these biblically Eastern surroundings—the blare of a European bugle-call. The men of the Moorish navy, *El Bashir's* crew, walking, like a young ladies' seminary out for exercise, and headed by their gorgeous commander-paymaster and their more humble other commanders.

After the navy, the chief among land-sharks for this country-side, the Basha of Tangier and district, on a corpulent red mule, a moving hillock of hauteur in cream-coloured cashmere and silk. Then the Basha's soldiery, a truculent set of ruffians, usually as disreputable externally as they are morally corrupt, on this occasion smart in new djellabs and snowy kaftans. Behind them, sublimely arrogant, showing off my horse and gun more bravely, God wot, than I could ever hope to exhibit them, Selaam Marrakshi, as gallant a scamp as any to be seen that day. Next, the Church dignitaries, afoot and on mules, downward gazing and proudly meek. Then a miscellaneous rabble, armed to the teeth, and clothed more gloriously than either Solomon or the lilies.

An hour was passed in prayer within the flaky

white walls of el m'sallah. And then a gun was fired. That told us who were infidels that the knife had entered the throat of the sacred sheep. A hurried scramble then, while the bleeding beast was hustled into a huge palmetto basket, and then the race for the great mosque at the far lower end of the city. Rushing slaves bore the basket, and a shouting multitude urged them on, with great sticks and strange, pious oaths. Should the sheep show a sign of life when the mosque was reached, all was well and a prosperous year before Morocco. Should the priest down there by the sea find the creature quite dead—all was ill, and Believers in El Moghreb must prepare for an evil, hungry year.

We waited, silent, there in the market-place.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The port guns told the news. The sheep had reached the mosque alive, expiring at the threshold, no doubt. All was well. Every Believer took his neighbour's hand, conveying then his own fingers to his lips in salutation. All quarrels between Believers were at an end. Peace and goodwill reigned supreme, with a keen appetite for mutton and kesk'soo. Vendettas ended in that moment—for the day at all events. The procession trailed back from the m'sallah, amid crooning acclamations and drum-beatings, and every man set off homeward to kill and cook his sheep.

In the afternoon the very air was heavy with repletion. Women fried and men sighed. Repletion ruled.

It was a brave day, this of the Feast of the Sheep in Tangier.

THE OPEN ROAD[1]

TO me, the unending marvel of Tangier is—that it is; and that, being what it is, the place should be where it is.

Here it basks in year-long sunshine on the shoulder of Africa, under the chin of Europe, a fragment of the savage, old, beautiful world in which Joseph's brothers looked enviously upon his many-coloured coat and schemed (one sees them squatting in a straggling, nudging group, over the mid-day meal in the baked, dry bed of a stream, where bulrushes rustle to tell one of what was, and lemon-coloured locusts dispute passage betwixt sand-crusted flat stones with rainbow-hued lizards and industrious, scavenging beetles) to make away with him. It is a drowsily living sheet from out the oldest, most gorgeously-illustrated family Bible that ever eager English children pored over upon a fresh Northern Sabbath afternoon. A Missionary Society's chromo-lithographs could hardly outrage Tangier. For the atmosphere of fair, twinkling feet, Circassian beauties, the savour of the Hârun er-Rasheed legend you must fare farther. But for the earth in its lusty, pastoral youth, not as science shows it you, but as you learned of it at your mother's knee—milk and honey, slow-moving sheep herds, eternal sunshine, crude, vivid colouring and miracles—here you have it

[1] In the spring of the year 1900.

FOOD

PRAYER

preserved to your hand, five days from Liverpool Street and almost within reach of electric search-lights on modern British fortifications.

That is the standing marvel of Tangier. And you should look upon it while you may. For just so soon as the dessicated and worm-eaten monarchy here crumbles and disappears at the touch of European occupation, like wood-ash before a gust of wind, just then and no later will the last easily-available link between Genesis and the world of halfpenny daily papers melt into the sunbeams and disappear. Meantime, it is here, on the shoulder of Africa, blinking across a few miles of laughing, pearl-fretted turquoise water at Europe and its buzz of civilisation.

But that is only Tangier. Would you glimpse the inwardness of things Moorish? (There's time and to spare for you to grow grey in the pursuit if your quest be insight and not merely a glimpse.) Would you taste the essence of Moorish life, sniff its real atmosphere, catch the sense of it? Then the word for you is "Boot and saddle," or, "Slipper and burda," as you choose—you must take to the Open Road; and open in all conscience you will find it as the windy Atlantic or the sun-paralysed Sahara. And you must do this, you must travel, not particularly for the sake of reaching this place or the other. That is a small matter. Your lesson and the knowledge you shall gain lies in the going, the journeying, the Road itself and its happenings; that Open Road to the stirring song of which, as Stevenson said, "our nomadic forefathers journeyed all their days." For thus and not otherwise you shall sense the true meaning of things Moorish. *Allons!*

It did seem that you might have lighted your

cigarette at the fire my words struck from Selaam's eyes yesterday when I told him to have all ready for a week's journeying this morning. If before he had been a man of affairs, then he was a field-marshal with a new-drafted plan of campaign in his pocket. The stage-manager and the gipsy contend in Selaam Marrakshi for the mastery of his nature. My personal attitude toward the open road is a thing long since understanded by this Moor, and accordingly our modest caravan had scarcely drawn a glance or a thought from you had you met us, in the cool, amethyst-roofed first sunshine of this morning, when we jogged out from the hotel terrace and along the beach toward Shwaanee and the Tetuan Road.

There was first my Lord Selaam, squatting lady's fashion and comfortably among a few odds and ends of impedimenta, on the flat Moorish burda of a red mule, which carried its hammer-head as do the china mandarins that bob at one from nursery mantelshelves. Partly led, partly driven, and continuously sworn at in an even, genial tone by Selaam was our pack-mule, a rusty, dingy, flea-bitten grey, qualified, I believe, to walk safely a tight-rope, laden as he was this morning with a bulging shwarri (a great double pannier of palmetto) containing a fold-up cot, rugs, food and the few other small matters which, from my point of view, form all that is necessary in the way of baggage when one takes to the road. For main body, rear-guard and camp-followers our caravan had myself between the peaks of an Algerian saddle astride a quick-walking black horse we call Zemouri; a gallant beast of a disposition that is invincibly buoyant and a mouth which is harder than the nether mill-stone.

And that was all.

If you have your own European saddle in Morocco and you are attached to it (I take it every decent Christian is fond of his own saddle), do not take it with you in the country. The life of the road in Morocco is not good for cherished pig-skin. But, on the other hand, I beseech you allow no malicious wight to beguile you into riding a Moorish saddle. Better, far better, to put away dignity and perch yourself sideways on a mule's pack; no bad plan at all, this, if comfort be your aim. The Moorish saddle is a picturesque snare, an invention of some Moorish djinn for the subjugation and torture of rash Nazarenes, whose knees it paralyses with a long-drawn agony of aching, the which, without experience, may be conceived of adequately only by martyrs to neuralgia. The high-peaked Algerian saddle, however, particularly when you fold a blanket over the grip, provides an easy, restful seat for journeying.

Should you, being an orthodox and proper person, seek advice in the orthodox and proper quarters before setting out upon the Open Road in Morocco, you will be bidden take a Basha's soldier with you for guard. And this is very sound and excellent counsel. For should you, peradventure, be murdered and robbed by the wayside, and if a Basha's soldier is of your party, then shall your heirs and assignees obtain fat indemnity through their honourable Legation from the Moorish Government; which Government will quite cheerfully lay waste an odd village or two, and even torture and imprison the inhabitants, to obtain the wherewithal to recompense your weeping heirs for your demise. Should their claim be ten thousand dollars, the screw will be applied to the tune

of twenty thousand dollars; fifteen thousand for the local squeezers, five thousand for your bereaved assignees. On the other hand, should you, ignoring the counsels of the orthodox, journey without one of the parasitical brigands called Basha's soldiers, then, in the case of such an accident as the one mentioned, your heirs will have, perforce, to pay the mourning tailor and dressmaker from out their own pockets, instead of with pence ground out from a starving, persecuted peasantry who never heard of either you, your heirs, or orders for mourning wear. Therefore, you will see at once the propriety of being guided by orthodox counsels. You will see it at once, and if you act upon it, good-bye to your chances of hearing the music of the true vagabond Song of the Open Road.

Again, your respected friend who knows will tell you that you require at least one or two European companions, two or three tents, half-a-dozen animals, a cook, three other men, and—it may be, if your friend is very wise and proper—a four-post bedstead or so. Very excellent things in their way these, without a doubt. Therefore, you will see at once the propriety of acting upon your friend's advice. And when you act upon it you will doubtless travel with comfort and perfect safety. You will never reach the Open Road, however. And, for comfort in travelling, a Pullman on the London and North-Western is hard to beat, you know.

For my Lord Selaam and me, we were bound for the Open Road this morning, hence the unobtrusive, unceremonious nature of our outsetting. And hence it was, perchance, that the sunny morning air had a song of its own for my ears as it swished past

them — we rode up the breeze—and that, as we crossed lush Shwaanee, and began to mount the hills, I found myself humming a tripping, foolish tune, belonging (for me) to boyish, seafaring days. Hence, too, it may have been that Selaam was crooning a Sheshawan love-song in the recesses of his grey sugar-loaf djellab-hood, and that Zemouri, my mettlesome Rozinante, pretended to see mares in palmetto bushes, whinnied absurdly to the non-existent fair, and endeavoured to persuade me that a crab-like, three-legged, rocking-horse movement was the best gait possible for a journey.

Herd-boys on the wayside tootled at us upon reed pipes; mooning cattle lowed at us; almost naked village children tumbled one over another in a race toward our path, there to stare and laugh at us; heaven, smiling, poured down morning-time, spring-of-the-year sunshine upon us; the earth, full-fed by the recently-ended spring rains (the last it was to taste for six or eight months), was calling, calling to us, strongly and sweetly, with a call that might not be denied. It seemed that all El Moghreb and the hosts of heaven knew us for vagabonds bound outward, and bade us God-speed; presented us with the freedom of the Open Road.

So Selaam sang crooning love-songs in his djellab-hood, to his own running accompaniment of pleasant oaths addressed to the mules. "Get along, then, spawn of many pigs! On then, children of vermin-eating Sôk rats!" And, speaking of djellab-hoods, permit me to offer you a piece of counsel which is not orthodox, yet, natheless, possibly worth the following. Should you ever go a-journeying in Morocco, furnish yourself beforehand with a djellab, with one of the

short, hooded outer garments which all Moors wear. Three or four dollars will purchase one, and its worth you shall find to exceed that of many dollars. It serves to make your Christian garb less conspicuous, to mention one of its lesser virtues, and one which at certain times and places is more than a lesser virtue. In rain it is a very fair protection to a horseman. The really rain-proof garment for riding in has yet to be invented. In strong winds (the Levanta is not a kindly or a gentle breeze) the djellab will save you many a headache, and preserve you, as well as any thing can, from the inflictions of dust and sand. The great virtue of the garment, however, putting aside its minor uses as rug, carpet, pillow and the like, lies in its admirable qualities as a shelter from too-powerful sunshine. In this respect the difference made at the end of a long day's ride by the possession or non-possession of a djellab is something difficult to exaggerate. It is as much to be commended, for use upon the road, as the Moorish saddle is to be deprecated and shunned.

Mention again (the atmosphere of this Biblical land makes for scriptural tautology) of the road in Morocco brings me to one of its most striking eccentricities: There are no roads in Morocco, not one, in the sense in which a European rider or driver speaks of a road. But then you see there are no vehicles, not one, except an old Georgian state coach or two in the royal cities—presents from European courts, moored and derelict since their arrival here, and used indifferently as cupboards or as stationary playthings for the ladies of the harem. A road in Morocco is a series of more or less parallel hoofs-marks beaten out of the earth by generations

of horses, mules, camels, donkeys, goats, cattle and foot-passengers, varying in width from a hundred yards to three feet, skirting gorges, dodging boulders, circumventing mountains, and leading one, by fell and flood, in Allah's good time, to the habitations of men. Navigation upon these tracks is one of the many and varied interests of travel in Morocco, and one calling for the exercise, at times, of the best a man has of skill, decision, care and resource. This and other calls I have this day responded to, to the best of my ability, during twelve full, good hours—such full hours as one seldom lives in these days among towns and men. I find that I have quite omitted in this place all description of our day's journey. No matter. That is part and parcel of journeying in Morocco. I find I have this evening an urgent need, a deliciously urgent need, of tobacco and a recumbent position. That, too, like my wolfish appetite, pertains to Moorish travel. I regret, however, that I should not even have mentioned our destination—Selaam's and mine's. But that omission is also part and parcel of the vagabond life of the Open Road.

We are going, by Allah's grace, robbers, weather, rivers, animals, and (when we approach it) Spanish officialdom permitting, to Ceuta. We have the peace of Europe sincerely at heart, Selaam and myself. Ceuta is Gibraltar's African *vis-à-vis*. Of late rumour and Russia have made Ceuta a name familiar to all men who, like Selaam and myself, are concerned with the concert of the Powers, the progress of humanity, and its lever—Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Therefore, if the Open Road will lead us there, we are going to inspect Ceuta.

. . . . . .

Find a man who is going through an entirely healthy and wholesome phase of his life, his surroundings and mode of living in accord with Nature, and you will have found one to whom the morning time contains the cream and prime of each day's existence. Turn to the man who is living in a highly artificial manner, pressed upon by the complex difficulties of all that in civilisation which estranges its children from Nature, and you will see one to whom morning is a grey and chilly season, a period of something like despondency, to be lived through and endured as stoically as may be, in order that the stimulation of evening (night is day's prime to such a man) may be attained.

I have noticed, when journeying in Morocco, that the mornings, the out-setting of each day, are unfailingly delightful and full of clean, strong exhilaration.

This morning, when I opened my eyes they were stimulated to full wakefulness by the picture they showed me of a tiny patch of sky (such skies as day-break brings over Morocco!), of a hue for which artistry has no name and painting no simulacrum, enframed by an unglazed little Moorish arched window high up toward the beamed roof of the vault-like room in which my cot swung. This little room, a store place for coffee, tobacco in the leaf, saddles, shwarries, and a hundred and one ancient oddments, Selaam's stage-management had placed at my disposal in the great fandak, or walled-in corral—a landmark to travellers in North Morocco—which lies among the mountains south of Tetuan, and distant one day's journey from Tangier. Falling from their sky-gazing feast, mine eyes encountered the huddled figure of

Selaam, hooded and sheeted in his grey djellab, asleep on the matted floor at my feet.

I rose quietly (the Moor's care of our animals had disturbed his night's rest a good deal, for beasts that work and do not eat all day must be tended well at night if their condition is to be maintained) and stepped on through a flaky white arch to the cloister without; for the queer, shadowy, covered way which skirted the fandak did form cloisters of a sort. There I picked my way gingerly among Moors sleeping in every variety of recumbent pose, their mules and donkeys tethered between them, packs and bundles all about them. You must remember that every kind of commodity, everything which has to be conveyed from one place to another in Morocco, is carried, perforce, on the back of some beast, or upon the shoulders of some woman.

Once clear of the cloisters, I was upon the cobbles of the open fandak, with only the sky above my head. Language fails me when I would tell you of that sky, of the incomparable calm of the strange light it used to veil from our eyes, the mysterious beginning of day's birth. Something there was in the air that sang gladly, slowly, in my ears, and something else that made piteous complaint. It seemed the soul of the coming day made music to hide Night's pains of labour; an epitome of all Nature's workings; the Earth's gladness ever uppermost yet never really hiding its own tragedy—the infinite pathos of life. And over all, that mysterious violet haze that baffled scrutiny as effectively as it baffles description, that says to a man, "Thus far, mortal, and no farther; and—and that is better so, for you!"

While I looked and let the cool cleanness of it all

filter into me (a man's soul needs washing at times, God wot, and these be the seasons and places for the ablution), the violet haze floated down after night in the west, and the hollow of heaven became mystically filled with essential daylight. I had time to marvel at this, out there on the fandak cobbles among reflective sheep and a few mildly melancholy oxen; I had time to wonder without understanding, and then, by silent, unmarked degrees, night's death was put away from my mind, the round breast-work of hills about me began to whisper, gently, but with a million voices, and in tones of growing volume, of young Day, his accession. The air, roused by these voices, took on a quite new life, became articulate, and spoke. The eastern half of the sky awoke to the daily glory of its mission. A young ewe bleated beside me like a child. A spear of living gold fire shot through the horizon. The hills' whisperings became a psalm of acclamation, true and gladly strong as a starling's note. Earth's bosom rose on a long-drawn breath; the sun, intolerably splendid, stood forth among his heralds; day had come, smiling royally upon barbarous Morocco.

I turned to the cloisters again, the cleaner for one kind of a bath, I think, and bade drowsy Selaam bring water and soap.

Three minutes later the whole great enclosure was, by comparison, full of life and movement. Yet not of activity as we of the North lands understand that word. Your true Muslim never bustles; a Moor never hurries and does not often move quickly. The distinction is not one without a difference. In all directions men were crouched over stakes and heel-ropes, girths were being tightened (a mule's pack-

saddle is never taken from its back during a journey: often the beast carries it for months at a stretch), shwarries adjusted, and animals were being grouped into caravans. Some few, sybarites, were making coffee in tins over charcoal braziers; others munched indifferently at leathery, brown loaves while moving hither and thither among their beasts. Before my toilet was completed the great ramshackle enclosure was deserted; camels, horses, mules, men and donkeys, all had trailed out at the crumbling, weather-scarred white entrance, and made their that day's start upon the Open Road.

We drank our *café au lait* (Selaam has his own mysterious methods of producing such rare luxuries as fresh milk in the country. I should expect it of him in the Sahara) and ate our bread and butter, the Moor and I, in absolute solitude; our tiny caravan assembled there in a corral that had held hundreds easily. Then I looked to my gun, we buckled on our harness, mounted and sallied out from the empty place of sleep into the glorious outer sunshine of the seventh hour after midnight.

From the point of view, let us say, of a London hotel manager, there was not much to be said for the accommodation afforded by that fandak; yet I doubt if any man stepped out of a London hotel this morning with just the strongly pulsing sense of satisfaction, of physical and moral well-being, that gave savour to our first cigarettes, Selaam's and mine's, as we filed out from our rest-house upon the mountain-side near Tetuan.

For half an hour our beasts climbed, we with them, and then began a steady two hours' long descent toward Tetuan, a grandly rugged, sun-bathed panorama

spread before us for our entertainment during those odd moments that could be spared for sight-seeing from a road in which flat boulders were oases and rare. I watched my black Zemouri more than once on that rugged mountain-side, holding one fore-foot deliberately in mid-air, his eyes scanning the track in vain for four square inches of level foot-hold. Not only was it no road at all, from the European point of view, but it was what an Irish hunting man would consider quite extraordinarily rough cross-country going. And this was a special thing, a rarity among Moroccan highways—a made road.

"That he's old road—before, sir," explained Selaam as our animals stumbled among spiky rocks on the extreme edge of a crevasse. He pointed down the gorge to where I could make out a ragged-edged ribbon of scattered boulders among the palmetto and scrub. Nature, by means of winter torrents, had stripped that ribbon of vegetation and of all *débris* lighter than rocks. Travellers, following in the torrent's wake, had called their way a road. "This new road, sir," continued the Moor; "he make it when Sultan he come here. All the womens—everybody; Sheshawan mountain peepils, too, he make it; everybody he work here to make road when Sultan he go to Tanjah. You know what for he do that, sir? Why he make road, and let Sultan to pass—don' to fight him?"

"No, how was it, Selaam?"

"Sultan peepil he tell all country peepils, Sultan he's goin' Tanjah to fight K'istians!" (Christians; Europeans). "That wha' for, sir. If he don' to say that, never he go pas' Sheshawan;—peepils he don' let him to pass; never, sir!"

A FOUNTAIN NEAR "THAT FAR OFF COURT" AT MARRAKISH

That is as it may be. The Sultan's folk may have cozened the country people, may have obtained volunteer labour under false pretences. The thing is more than likely, I apprehend. But that their diplomacy actually caused a road to be made across those mountains I would deny with my last breath. So, I am assured, would Zemouri and the mules. For the Moors, in this as in most other matters in the present period of their decay, are served and contented by the rudest kind of makeshift. Anything that an animal may be spurred over and does not sink in past his girth, that is a Moor's notion of a road. When some unfortunate beast is bogged past his girth, after rain, then its rider dismounts, unpacks, and with stick and voice forces his animal on, or, if the case is too sorry a one, leaves it there. I have seen that done more than once. And of such a place Selaam would admit that—"That road, sir, he's little bad, not much water he come there; mud he's strong, too much—no?" And I would nod, and Selaam would skirt the evil spot and, acting upon some instinct Allah has given him, discover in a *détour* some less deadly track. But those things are features of winter travel in El Moghreb. Between April and November rocks and heat and hard-baked mud-holes are one's worst enemies; mud in the quagmire stage is rare.

It was past nine, and the lusty morning sunshine was peeling my nose, despite my djellab-hood's shelter, when we won to the fertile Tetuan valley and left those ironbound hills of the Sultan's "road" behind us. White-walled Tetuan lay within easy view of us now, most picturesquely situate upon an out-jutting spur among the foot-hills of a green, smoothly-outlined mountain range, and looking across a lush and

meadowy valley to the scarred grey face of the wild mountains behind and among which lie Sheshawan and er-Riff; the impregnable stronghold of barbarous clans of hardy mountain bandits and pirates who fight cheerfully among themselves, *pour passer le temps* and to keep their hands in, whilst entirely and successfully defying all authorities from the Sultan downward, and challenging the venturesome Christian traveller to visit their confines if he dare, and if he be tired of life. Grand, snow-capped, rugged heights these, more inaccessible than Thibet to the Nazarene and occupying a position in relation to civilisation which is probably without a parallel in this hemisphere.

One feature this town of Tetuan possesses is common with many another Moorish city to which I have journeyed. One approaches it from the mountains at the end, it may be, of a long, hot day's ride. One turns a bend in a winding track, and suddenly there is Tetuan in full view, gleaming white and close at hand. One sighs and slackens one's grip of the saddle, full of that weariness which is so well worth attaining—the weariness that lends rare and delicious zest to one's rest and refreshment, the weariness which makes real refreshment, such as is never tasted in highly-civilised surroundings, possible, a thing to be enjoyed and remembered. One feels for a cigarette, and then—"But no, we shall be there in a quarter of an hour. I will wait."

A full two hours later one draws rein outside the fandak in Tetuan.

Travel in Morocco teaches many lessons, and, among them, none more thoroughly and well than that of the virtue of enduring patience. Its method of education is Nature's finely inexorable method.

Thus: The touch of fire burns; observe and act accordingly; here is no shirking, excuse, or possible extenuation; it burns, first and last and always; learn this lesson, or be, neither whipped, wept over, excused or rebuked, but just burned.

Tetuan city was no more than a wayside station of our day's journey, and our little caravan clattered noisily through its arched cobbled streets with never a pause, save one of a few moments in the market-place, while Selaam purchased and heaped before him a few bundles of fresh grass for the animals. On the town's far side, and just as we emerged among the saints' graves from its northern gate, a file of women passed us, bowed down under great burdens of market produce. One carried an earthern jar of milk, and her Selaam accosted, but (as became a good Muslim) without looking at her face.

"Oh, woman," said he, scanning space, "thou hast milk there?"

"Ihyeh!" The woman eyed her sand-encrusted toes.

"And the price thereof?"

"Three bilîon."

"Here be two; give me the milk, woman."

"O man, but my jar—and I a poor woman."

"See! Here is another penny for thy jar! Give!"

"H'm! It would seem to be God's will, O man. Take!"

So we rode on with our jar of milk, and presently, under the shadowy lee of a high bamboo hedge, we dismounted, loosed girths, placed grass before the animals, and sat down to devour vast quantities of bread, fruit, cold chicken and meat. Ten-thirty seems

a suitable enough hour for tiffin after four hours in the saddle.

Three hours later, after traversing a scrub-covered plain and a flower-carpeted range of hills, we emerged in brilliant searching sunshine upon the powdery white beach of the Mediterranean, thirty-two hours after leaving Tangier's Atlantic bay. Till close upon sundown we plodded along beside the sea. A Mediterranean beach makes heavy going by reason that, the sea being very nearly tideless, the sand is always dry and powdery, covering a horse's leg half way to the knee at every step. Yet there is a slight rise and fall of tide in this part of the Mediterranean, as we were presently to prove to ourselves, Selaam and myself.

The sun was dipping low for evening, a lurid, theatrical sunset, when we reached the mouth of a river, no more than forty or fifty feet broad. A swirling, quarrelling treacherous-seeming stream it was, here still and darkling, there rushing like a mill-race; an inconsequent and uncertain little river with apparently no definite aim or purpose in life. On its brink before us stood two fishermen with three donkeys. In the stream's middle a third man was swimming with that plunging violence which bespeaks panic. He was safe enough, however, for though driven over the bar into the sea, he landed, with no great difficulty, a dozen paces below us. Not so the unfortunate donkey belonging to this rash wight. The master, finding the current too strong for him, had turned back, lending nothing more than the assistance of his voice, in fervid blasphemy, to the animal. Now that donkey was a mere brown fleck upon the opaque evening sea. I cannot understand why the poor beast's seaward progress should have

been so swift, but it seemed to me that a few minutes sufficed to carry it beyond our range of vision in the rapidly-diminishing half-light of that sunset.

And now the owner of the lost donkey approached us, dripping and scant of breath, and began to make his moan to heaven and to us. His plaint was a grotesque piece of bathos.

"Oh, my donkey," he wailed, apostrophising the distant speck; "would that I were in thy place, another in mine, for, O, a donkey without a master is worth at least six dollars; but I, Cassim, without my donkey, what smallest penny am I worth? Oh, my donkey, my donkey; why would you leave our El Moghreb? What infidel land do you seek now? Yá waïlî! Yá waïlî!"

So there we were stranded, Selaam, the fishermen, the animals and myself, with never a loaf of bread between us, eight or ten miles distant from Ceuta, a town, by the way, the gates of which are not opened to prince or pauper once they have been closed at an early stage of evening. The fishermen thought the river might be fordable soon after midnight. They were not sure. Allah was very great. Meantime our position was very typical, very characteristic, of the happenings which come to beguile the way for who chooses to take to the Open Road in Morocco.

. . . . . .

Twenty-four hours ago we were brought to a standstill, Selaam, myself and our little caravan, by the unfordable condition of the river which has to be crossed by those who would approach Spanish Ceuta from Moorish Tetuan. It seems to me more like twenty-four days, but—let me tell you how we fared.

I think I have stated before that, having relied on passing last night in Ceuta, we recklessly ate our fill by the wayside in the morning, and even fed two urchins and three pariah dogs, leaving ourselves with nothing, save, as accident ruled it, three square inches of bread, a handful of dates, and a tin of Danish butter; excellent items in their way, yet scarcely calculated, of themselves, to provide with an adequate evening meal two mules, a horse, an able-bodied Moor, and a hungry Nazarene. No, it was inadequate; and, to tell the plain truth, I was conscious, while turning away from that annoying little river's edge, of a sensation of hungry regret in connection with the odd loaf and section of a chicken which we had, with such a finely careless generosity divided among chubby infants and lean pariahs that morning. Hunger is so intimate and personal a matter. And you are to remember that we had passed seven consecutive hours in the saddle since that bread and chicken episode.

The question of where we should spend the night appealed to me less urgently. The evening air was pleasant enough, and the sky a sufficiently good roof in such weather. And, while I was assuring myself of this, rain began to fall, warmly, gently, and with an even quietness which suggested great reserves of watery wealth and beneficence. A most fortunate and little-expected boon to Moorish agriculturists without a doubt; but—"Selaam," I said severely, drawing my bridle hand under the djellab-sleeve's shelter; "you must find a house. You savvy any village here —'um?"

"No, sir; I think he don' got any village here. Come on, sir; I find something."

So we moved on in the moist darkness, ourselves and the animals, the two fishermen with their animals, and the other fisherman with his grotesque exclamations and wailings regarding his drowned and departed donkey. Why this bereaved, mild maniac and his silent friends attached themselves to us I cannot say. They, like ourselves possessed no food nor shelter; so far we were akin.

It appeared to me that we scaled several mountains and traversed many very rocky gorges, but Selaam solemnly assures me that our way was "not far too much, sir!" and I am bound to accept, even though I cannot entirely comprehend, his assurance. At all events, we ultimately stumbled upon two mud and wattle huts, each about the size of a four-post bedstead, the pair standing under the lee of a very thoroughly ruined tower; a relic of Spanish occupation here, but a relic in too advanced a state of decay to admit of its affording shelter for a crow. Upon investigation, we found that one of these huts held a charcoal-burner and two of his friends—all Moors, of course. The other hut gave shelter to the charcoal-burner's wife and two children. And we were five, including our fishermen followers. To me the prospect of shelter seemed dubious.

I am bound to say, however, that when Selaam had explained the situation, the charcoal-burner and his friends turned out of their hut, and squatted on the damp earth outside, whilst waving me in to their hovel as though that were the barest and most matter-of-course kind of courtesy. The host said, "Marhabba bi-kum!" (Welcome to thee), with something of an air, and some clean boards, the bottom boards of a boat they were, were laid on the earth within this tiny

hut for me to sit on. The eaves of the hut, by the way, ran down to within two and a half feet of the ground, and the doorway was, say, two feet wide and three high. At one end the hut, from ridge-pole to within two feet of earth, was open ; a fact for which I was subsequently made most thankful. I mention these things here because the place was quite typical of the houses of the poorer country Moors.

I gave my horse two of our odd dozen of Tafilet dates and announced that anyone who could beg, borrow or steal me some barley should be rewarded. Our host smiled and shrugged at the idea of there being any person in his locality rich enough to be possessed of barley or of horses to eat it. Nevertheless, when I displayed a little silver, two men girded up their loins, took clubs, and set off in the darkness to hunt for horse-feed.

In various other respects a mule is better suited than a horse to the exigencies of the road in Morocco, but particularly is this so in the matter of feeding. A mule will eat anything that its teeth can penetrate, and many things which they cannot. I have never met the horse, on the other hand, that was not by way of being an epicure, and an epicure, too, that would liefer starve than eat food unsuited to its palate. Irregularity in feeding would appear to affect mules but very slightly. Let your barb go dinnerless for one night, however, and on the next day your spurs, if you have the heart to use them, shall appeal to him in vain for anything more than the most languid and spiritless sort of gait. The mule, on the other hand, conspicuously devoid as he invariably is of gallantry or dash, has the stubborn, passive virtues of his temperament, and, if he cannot

rise to an emergency, rarely falls short of his normal attainments till he lays him down for the last time.

I was unable to swing my cot in the charcoal-burner's hut, for, had I done so, the little place had been entirely filled. So when our animals were as well disposed as might be under the ruined tower's lee, I squatted down on my boards, with a rug, in the hut, and bade Selaam bring in the host and his friends. A soaking rain was falling outside, and I could not well permit these poor fellows to expose themselves to it while there was a spare inch in the hut. They crawled in with two of the fishermen and squatted solemnly in the hut, sharing between them one long kief-pipe and two flat black loaves of bran bread.

Presently the two seekers after barley and its reward returned, sodden but triumphant, with a small measure of barley, beans and corn. They were duly rewarded, and our animals received the treasurable find, Zemouri, the horse, as I need hardly say, being given the cream of it. Then the sodden ones crawled into the hut and steamed there, telling, at great length, their adventures during the two hours they had devoted to foraging on my behalf. Selaam and myself, we munched at our fragment of bread and ate our handful of dates, save two, which I put aside for Zemouri's delectation next morning.

Heralded by the furious yelping of two gaunt curs outside the hut, there presently came to us yet another visitor, a little, black-avised fellow, hairy as Esau, with roving eyes, and an old Spanish musket. By a miracle, the newcomer found a few inches of space into which he was able to insinuate his person. I made inquiry, and was informed that

the newcomer was a robber by profession, and that he sought shelter now from one of his nightly prowls, by reason of the dirty weather. I mechanically loosened the revolver holster on my belt as this piece of information reached me; and Selaam, noticing the gesture, shook his head reassuringly.

"No, no, sir; he all right; he very good man, sir. Suppose he find you outside, yes!" Selaam drew one brown forefinger suggestively across his throat. "But here—never, sir! The man who belong this house, he friend for that robber. Never he rob you here—only if you sleep too much."

This was certainly satisfactory, so far as it went. I saw no great likelihood of our dropping off to sleep in a hut that had been small for three, and that now held ten. I did doze, however, more than once during the small hours, the point of that honourable robber's long dagger-sheath touching the leg of one of my riding-boots, my shoulders wedged in the great Algerian saddle. But each time my eyes opened I saw Selaam smoking, quietly watchful, my rifle across his knees.

Such a lurid little interior it was, with its wall of windy, rain-swept sky at one end, its curious store of flotsam from forgotten Mediterranean wrecks—a hatch-cover, boat's bottom-boards, and an old, worm-eaten stern-sheet board, bearing in half-obliterated green letters the word "Dolores"; these things and its curious human occupants, hard, gaunt, hungry, weather-stained, and only half-human it seemed, having no need, apparently, of sleep, expecting no more in life than a little rude shelter and a little scurvy black bread each day; robbing whom they might, killing when they must, working fitfully as men may have worked

in the Stone Age, risking life and limbs each day for a few pence, themselves being robbed, beaten and imprisoned at intervals, when information reached some hungry local authorities of a haul having been made on this rocky shore, some would-be smugglers having been successfully robbed, or killed and robbed. An odd lodging for the night, this of mine below Ceuta.

We did not ford that obstinate little river at its mouth after all, though grey daybreak found us waiting on its brink; Zemouri munching good-humouredly, and pretending that my two dates required ten minutes of pleasant mastication. One of the fishermen came near to losing his life in testing the ford for us, and subsequently, with his fellows, guided us, by a long detour, over swampy, scrub-covered marshes, to an inland ford which we crossed with dry saddle-flaps. During the most part of the time Ceuta was well within view, high and dry on the far-out jutting horn of the great bay we were skirting.

Toward noon we reached a ramshackle Moorish guard-house, on the confines of the neutral strip between Spanish Ceuta and Moorish territory. The neutral strip itself is the stony, trickling bed of a stream, which has, apparently, seen better days. It was once a river; but now, having forgotten its original mission in life, it is a wide, indefinitely rambling ditch. Upon its far side we were called to a halt by a knot of funny little toy soldiers in blue Zouave trousers and string sandals. A few carried rifles, two wore coats, all were smoking cigarettes, and they came trotting after our little caravan because, it seemed, their keen watchfulness had detected my rifle where it swung across Selaam's broad shoulders.

I gathered that these excitable little men were convinced that we had endeavoured to elude their vigilance in the matter of this rifle. Now, with stern dignity, with military peremptoriness, they demanded that the gun be handed over to their keeping. I take some pride in being a law-abiding person, but I plead guilty to having shown some resentment when these little men awkwardly jerked my Lee-Metford from its case, pronounced it a Mauser, and managed between them to jam its breech while endeavouring to unload it. I begged a receipt of some sort, a voucher by which I might reclaim my property. This involved a long and exciting debate, during the progress of which a crowd gathered. Again and again different aspects of my sufficiently moderate request were submitted to the eager crowd, collectively and individually, by the voluble little military gentlemen in sandals. I found these Spaniards vastly more difficult to deal with than the Moors. But, at long last, it seemed my affair was favourably settled. An old, old veteran in dungarees hobbled up from his seat beside a wash-tub, tore a tiny fragment of paper from the edge of some journal, pencilled laboriously upon it the legend: "No. 97" (I have often wondered what chance may have directed his choice of this number), and handed it to the chief among the sandalled gentry, with a gesture that was at once pacific, soothing and commandingly impressive. It seemed a treaty of peace had been concluded. The smeary scrap of paper was handed over to me, with a bow, and, dissembling alike my inclination to grin and my anxiety regarding the welfare of the rifle, I turned and we trotted on toward Ceuta.

"But that he's bad thing, sir," muttered Selaam, behind me. "I no like him. We don't finish yet. I

think I glad a little when we get away from that Ceuta!"

Selaam voiced my own sentiments exactly in his own picturesque way, and strengthened them. Our entry was not auspicious.

. . . . . .

You will remember that circumstances led to my passing last night, with Selaam and eight other good Muslims, fishermen, pirates, robbers and what not, in one tiny hut, the property of our host the charcoal-burner. Now a night spent in that manner—one's shoulders between saddle-flaps, one's thoughts running hungrily upon the menus of meals enjoyed in the past, one's animal instincts insisting that plain bread and cheese, if only obtainable, were excellent fare—is not at all calculated to lend ordinary neatness, far less military precision and dignity, to one's appearance next morning. Yet as I rode past a knot of Spanish urchins toward the outer gate of Ceuta, Spain's famous possession in Morocco, and Gibraltar's *vis-à-vis* in the maritime entrance to the East, the cry which greeted me was,—

"Buller! Buller! Yah—inglés! Los podrido ingleses! (the rotten English!). Buller! Buller! Yah!"

The gallant first commander-in-chief of our forces in South Africa had scarcely been flattered, I fear, to hear so travel-stained and towzelled a wanderer as myself addressed by his name. My own feeling in the matter is of no importance; it partook less of gratification than of embarrassment.

The very officials who, to examine my pack-mule for contraband and to ask for my passport, stopped me beside the town moat, were grinning broadly as they listened to our salutations from the street urchins.

These same military officials, by the way, were cloaked, armed, booted and spurred (not sandalled), and struck me as being altogether more imposing than their comrades who had taken away my gun at the guard-house on the frontier. So I ventured to solicit their good graces in the matter of that gun, said I had no receipt for it, and showed them the dingy scrap of newspaper with "No. 97" scrawled upon it, which was all the voucher I had been able to obtain. These gentlemen shook their heads very dubiously, I thought, as they bade me preserve with great care my "No. 97" scrap. A poor thing to preserve indeed, but I stowed it carefully away in my watch, and hoped for the best.

Through the courtesy of the British Minister in Tangier I had obtained an official Spanish document commending me to the Commandant-General of Ceuta as a harmless person afflicted with an inane and purposeless desire to view Ceuta. This document, and this alone, carried me across the great moat, over the drawbridge, and within the walls of Spain's fortified possession. Without it I had assuredly been turned back, to be devoured by the ridicule of the young gentlemen who flung at me the distinguished name of Buller. This is certain, and I mention it for the benefit of any reader who may contemplate making the journey from Tangier.

The landward walls that guard Ceuta are prodigious, well calculated to impress Moors, and perhaps the most solid thing in the way of fortification that the place has to show. Riding past them and into the clean, roughly-cobbled main street of the town, fresh from the mountains and gorges of a country in which everything contrived by man's hand is of the

crudest and most meagre sort, I found Ceuta and its buildings picturesque for the most part, very clean-looking, trimly kept, and quite the abode of civilisation; civilisation that is, of course, as it is understanded and exhibited in the southern half of the Peninsula.

We rode direct to the fonda or hotel; Selaam, myself, our mounts, and the pack-mule. Had you fancied that, because Ceuta is a penal settlement, and possessed of only a certain order of civilisation, that it therefore contained no hotel. That was your misapprehension. Ceuta boasts the possession of a very distinguished hotel. It is distinguished, inasmuch as that a good few years of wandering and a fairly catholic experience of hostelries in the East, in Australia, in South America, and other places remote from Bond Street, have not as yet introduced me to a place of entertainment more thoroughly and consistently unsatisfactory than is Ceuta's hotel. True, there was a certain charcoal-burner's hut in which I found shelter once, and— But no! Let me be just to that gaunt maker of charcoal. Personally, I preferred his hut to this fonda.

I was shown into an apartment without a window or any kind of ventilation, the which I was invited to share as sleeping and sitting-room with two Spaniards. These two gentlemen, whose acquaintance I was not privileged to make, were doubtless excellent, and, it may be, illustrious Señors. Their beds suggested an entire aloofness from that virtue which cometh next to godliness. Their godliness may itself have been all sufficient for them. As for me, while I pondered sadly over these trestle beds—and I am not squeamish—Selaam, who considers me his protector and is mine, gave me clearly to understand that he could not

permit me to make use of this gloomy and unsavoury place. That is the beauty of Selaam; he is so thoroughly the paternal despot, the beneficent tyrant, the kindly Providence. Like a child, I yielded to him blindly; like a grown-up, I was truly grateful for his tyranny.

Within the hour my autocrat had me installed in a small but eminently decent and cleanly apartment in the private house of a resident of respectable standing. I make no doubt that the good rascal represented that I was intimately connected with most of the crowned heads of Europe. I was made quite comfortable in my new quarters; as comfortable, that is, as might be under the circumstances. The immediately preceding twenty-four hours of travel had rather told upon me in one or two small ways, and, curiously, upon Selaam. I questioned the Moor, and found our symptoms were identical. Certain kinds of food, devoured with Open Road gusto, and certain prolonged fastings; these had combined to somewhat disturb our internal economy. And that brings me, haunch-down, upon a little episode which somehow made me think chucklingly of Rabelais.

Toward evening we wended our way, Selaam and myself, to a certain pharmacy in Ceuta's main street. We were the rather jeeringly observed of all street observers, and were frequently reminded of my nationality and of the names of various distinguished British generals commanding in South Africa. Oddly enough these reminders were not at all intended to be flattering. My walks abroad in hospitable Ceuta gave me a sympathetic insight into what I imagine must be the feelings of a pious Oriental when he

strolls through London attired in his Oriental best, and accompanied by mocking urchins. We went, I say, to a pharmacy, and by the aid of smatterings of various tongues (I had next to no Spanish) established an understanding with the worthy proprietor. He informed me gracefully that we both stood in urgent need of a certain excellent and thorough *purgativo* which he recommended. In all good faith I gave the word, and doses were administered to us on the spot.

In one hour and a half, or two hours, "all would be most well" with us, I was assured. Three hours later we held a consultation. Our symptoms were still identical, Selaam's and mine, our good chemist's prescription had failed, and our condition was in no way improved. Together we set out once more for the pharmacy. Now, whether our countenances betrayed us, or native shrewdness guessed our errand, I cannot say, but a group of young women, standing near the chemist's, broke out into gusts of shrill laughter upon our approach, comments containing the word *purgativo* fell round us in a soprano hail, mantilla ends were thrust into shrieking mouths, the news was carried breathlessly from door to door, and this last shot, fired at my bowed, diminished head by a young lady in yellow and black, scorched the very nape of my neck as we won to the cover of our pharmacy.

"*Purgativos* for good Spaniards are wasted on English leather-bellies; try some Transvaal gunpowder from Kruger!"

In cold print, one may smile at it. In the event I found that corner of Ceuta too warm for my Anglo-Saxon skin. We returned to our quarters with some-

thing more than precipitancy, and by way of a side street. Incidentally it occurs to me, with less of regret than relief, that I forgot to pay for those inefficacious *purgativos*. But was not the episode Rabelaisian, and of the Latins, Southern? You are to remember that capote-clad sentries paced under orange and citron trees in the little square beside which those laughing muchachas roasted the forlorn Englishman and his Moor. They wore flowered mantillas, and heels to their shoes that clacked liked castanets.

You know what a great service Cervantes rendered Spain. Who knows what the future may yet hold in store for her, and if only another Cervantes should arise, to tickle her while he taught?

Now, with regard to Ceuta. But, incidentally, and as a warning against what is called candour in a friend, and uncharitableness in an enemy, I must quote here a remark made by the good lady whose house sheltered me. I sought to win her good graces by praising what I supposed to be her native town. My imagination failed me, however; for a moment I could think of nothing to praise. Recollection of a fact came then, where invention failed. "Your streets are very clean and nicely kept here," I said.

"Oh, yes; and they should be, when labour costs nothing. In my country, Malaga, where we have no convicts to do those things for us—there it is different!"

Good soul! Her remark struck me as a curious blend of local pride, deprecation, regret, uncharitableness, pessimism and modesty. I think also, by the way, that it was substantially true. One meets the prisoners, singly and in little gangs, all over Ceuta, up till sunset gun-fire. They appear to do everything

that is done in Ceuta, outside eating, drinking, sleeping, swagger, military ceremonial, and such of the amenities as may be looked for in a populace composed of prisoners and their guardians, soldiers, and those who supply the needs of both sections. These convicts wear polo caps, short jackets and little metal badges, like those of cabmen, on their sleeves. Each small party of them is accompanied by a sort of serang; a good-conduct man, presumably, who carries a tough-looking stick with a thin leathern loop at its end. If your wrist be in the loop and the stick be then violently twisted, you will be found ready, I am assured, to express most complete agreement in any sort of proposition which the holder of the stick may have to make. Some instinct inclines me to belief in this theory. I accepted it freely, upon trust. But, regarding the matter from what I imagine would be the standpoint of any intelligent and open-minded convict of experience, I think that, putting aside the loop-stick contrivance, the Ceuta prisoners are not badly off. There are many ways of picking up food when you are given the freedom of the street. All the Ceuta prisoners smoke at their work. The climate is pleasant enough, and going to bed early is no hardship—once you have passed the age at which it is a virtue. No; if my choice of a place of residence were limited strictly to the world's penal stations, I am not sure that I should not hit upon Ceuta. Granted a slightly wider choice, I fancy I should prefer Bethnal Green or—most other places.

When, in my hearing, Selaam made inquiry regarding the purchase of barley for our animals, he was told that barley and other kinds of forage were contraband, but that we *might be able* to buy a little

at such and such a shop. We visited four shops, under a resident's escort, and finally found a man possessed of about sufficient barley to make one satisfactory meal for our three beasts. He measured it out in a vessel no bigger than a breakfast-cup, and grudgingly sold it at so much the cup. The price of that one meal had kept our animals comfortably in Tangier (or in a village outside the Ceuta boundaries) for a week. Most things are contraband in Ceuta, including visitors. And in view of the first fact, the second is perhaps scarcely to be regretted. From the commercial standpoint the Government could not be called liberal, and industrially I do not think the place could be called thriving; though, to be sure, I was told by members of that profession that smuggling was fairly brisk in Ceuta.

Somewhat to my alarm, I discovered, when our little caravan was prepared for my departure from Ceuta, that leaving the Spanish possession was as fraught with difficulty and official ceremony as entering it. However, when I had made my salaams to a variety of uniformed authorities, and furnished them with all such essential information, as the date of my birth (my reply on this point failed for quite a little while to satisfy one generalissimo, who was convinced that I was older — or younger—than I admitted), the marriage question, my business, physical peculiarities, residence when at home and when not at home, my religious views, my family history, and the like; then, or within an hour or so of then, I was presented with a ticket-of-leave, and, as it were, carefully watched off the premises by two severe officials, who appeared convinced that they

TOWN-GATE IDLERS: AL KSAR EL KEBEER

were dealing with a criminal of very desperate character, and by a small mob of the young gentlemen who persisted in addressing me as a general from South Africa.

At the frontier guard-house they protested entire ignorance of anything like a Lee-Metford sporting-rifle, and turned up their respective noses at my poor little "No. 97" scrap of paper, the only thing I had with which to support my claim to my own gun. I could have wept, if the boys had not been calling me "Buller." Selaam began to look dangerous. His right hand was fumbling under his djellab, where, to my knowledge, there hung a certain murderous dagger. I was reminded uncomfortably of a little city-gate difficulty of mine some time ago, in which Selaam had come near to butchering a whole board of guardians when they were rude to me. I cast about me for a means of compromise, and found instead, as chance directed, the hoary old dotard by whose intervention I had secured the "No. 97" scrap. Selaam roused the patriarch for me, where he lay asleep under his boat, and for a minute his rheumy eyes had the blindness, or the impudence, to deny recognition of me. I was fumbling for backsheesh, when sudden shame descended upon the guard; a member of it stalked into their quarters, returned with my gun, handed it me without a word, and presented me with a full view of his narrow-shouldered back.

Selaam murmured in his native tongue a soft remark upon the subjects of pigs, graves, and the ancestry of the Spanish army. Then we rode away across the neutral strip of shrivelled-up river-bed into Moorish territory.

"You little glad, sir?" he said as we took to the hills.

"What about, Selaam?"

"We leave Ceuta, sir."

"Well, yes; I think I am, a little. Morocco, he's better, eh?"

"Ih—yeh!—sir!" He has a way of putting volumes into a word occasionally, has this Moor.

And now with regard to Ceuta, the town, our Gibraltar's *vis-à-vis*. But I fancy the guide-books contain very adequate and useful information about Ceuta. It is not a bad prison, as prisons go. As a fortified station, too, it has indubitably great natural strategical and geographical advantages. Also, in the hands of a great and wealthy power, able to spend, say, from five to ten millions for a beginning upon fortifying it, Ceuta would be something of a menace to British power in the Mediterranean. At present its guns, or those of them that can be seen, are suggestive of Moorish armaments. At present it is not in the hands of such a power as I have mentioned, and, rumour to the contrary notwithstanding, I cannot think it ever will be, while the pride of the Spanish people remains a factor to be reckoned with by the rulers of Spain. And that will remain a factor, I think, for so long as the Spanish people remain a nation. Should the nation—

But it certainly will not materially change before I get through with this my return journey from Ceuta to Tangier; and then I may find opportunity to post you further in the matter.

A SWAN'S SONG FROM MOROCCO[1]

"WHO can say? Only that which is written can be. But, between the Sôk and the big mosque, I met three French poodles this morning, and each one freshly and modishly shaved—*pardieu!*"

I had but that moment landed from the little English steamer, and, to my surprise, had been greeted in Tangier's barbaric custom-house by a journalist of some repute in Europe, a kindly cosmopolitan whom I had last seen, a year before, in the Plaza de Fernandos, Seville. His remark about French poodles was proffered by way of reply to my question: "Well, and how goes the political game of grab in Morocco?" I smiled.

"And what," I asked, "is the Moorish view of this fashion in dogs?" My friend shrugged his elegantly-clad shoulders with Oriental exaggeration.

"Simply, my friend, that all things, the good, the bad and the indifferent, are from Allah el Wahad (God the One), and cannot be otherwise. 'The Moving Finger'—and 'nor all the tears.' But, B'ism Illah, you should know the attitude!"

My cosmopolitan friend, in his bright way, assumed too much. No Westerner may truly *know* the attitude. Yet if they have not been lived wholly in vain, the last few years have brought to me some

[1] Published in the *Fortnightly Review*, July 1901.

inkling of it, by the will of Allah and the mouths of Moors. And I am bound to admit that the inkling is not exhilarating to a lover of Morocco.

Leaving my journalistic friend then, and followed by mine own particular rascal among Moors, I wended my way over the familiar cobbles of the main street, past the great mosque, and so by the inner Sôk to the abode of my trusted friend and counsellor, Hadj Mohammed Mokdin — the f'keeh, ex-kadi, past master of Al Koran and its commentaries, and courtly, learned student in the book of Moorish life and affairs. Here disappointment stepped out to greet me, in the person of Hadj Cassim, the third son of my old counsellor. His father, though advised of my coming, had been obliged to leave Tangier four days since, for the coast and Marrakish. It was an order. There was no gainsaying his Lord the Sultan's message. The old scholar was needed at Court, and so for the time was lost to me.

"But the Hadj, my father, will send thee written word from the Court of Allah's anointed, giving thee all news thereof. For that reason a swift courier went with him. Also, here be written pages for thy hand, the which held my father to his cushions for many hours upon the eve of his going hence."

Now, it was known to Hadj Cassim that I lacked altogether understanding of the written word in Arabic, and so it presently fell out, when glasses of steaming, syrupy green tea had been served to us in the little *patio*, that the young man himself read for my edification the letter written by his father. Here then is my topical learning for your use, as I gleaned it in the mint-scented little *patio* of Hadj Mokdin's Tangier house, where one of the most scholarly and

intelligent of Moors lives poorly, for the reason that he grinds no mercenary axe, and pursues ever knowledge rather than pelf or place.

"To that Nazarene who is separated from the writer rather by race than in the spirit, by blood than in thought, and whose honourable name is inscribed hereover: greeting, salutation, and devout good wishes from Hadj Mohammed Mokdin, by Allah's mercy, student of His book and His works, in this curious Tangier of the borderland, where belief toucheth unbelief, and much trafficking maketh neither for wisdom nor cleanliness. B'ism Illah!

"My son will have told thee of my absence and its cause. Being what I am, I grieve not for that which was written, yet heartily do I trust that it may prove Allah's will that I may look upon thy face, in the calm, thinking hours of evening, after my return, in sha' Allah, to Tangier. And now to give thee of the little that my mind hath of judgment, where the affairs of our Sunset Land are concerned.

"To the mouse we may assume that no other matter hath so great an import as the movements of the cat. In the matter of the French encroachments in the south-east, I have to tell thee that, in my opinion, France is actually rather farther from (though apparently nearer) her desire than at the period of your parting from me here last year. It is true that, acting from that base she stole last year, Igli; France has occupied 6000 men in the oases this winter, and finished her winter's work by surrounding, but not occupying, Figuig. But this in truth is no more than a part of her admitted seizure of Igli. Figuig, though farther south, is no farther within our Lord's

boundaries, and indeed is less clearly a portion of his realm. We of the Faith saw clearly last year that the seizure of Igli was but the marking of a fandak and halting-place on the road to Figuig, the which is now ripe fruit for French gathering.[1]

"That is no great matter. There, on the border-line, where French protection hath long been a thing of common barter, and her influence necessarily strong, so much was to be expected. But far more was to be expected during this last winter. France's 6000 soldiers were there established; before them the great Tafilet oases, cradle of the reigning dynasty elevated by Allah. Much was expected, I say, and with reason. And there has happened—nothing, my friend. And if you ask me how and why, I would say that now France is turning the first page in her real learning of the difficulties which do beset her path across this our Morocco. I would speak without malice, but with sorrow. The soldiers of France have suffered bitterly in a land they were not born to master by sheer force of arms. 'Remember our Lord Kitchener and the Dervishes,' you would say. My friend, there be many and great differences, beginning with Figuig's remoteness from such a highway as the Nile, and including this fact, not as yet known to Europe. The Moors of the desert shoot sitting or lying down, are past masters in ambush, cover-taking, and the arts of harassing night attacks, in country every stone of which is known to their very horses, and unknown to the Christian. Your Lord Kitchener could never mow them down with his machine guns, for to be mown a crop must stand

[1] The "ripe fruit" was "gathered," as newspaper readers are aware, a few months ago.—A. J. D. 1903.

and be visible. Further, my friend, it is (more largely than ye of the North believe) the cause which decides the fight. In Egypt, the Mahdi was his own cause, placing himself before Islam. He invited the Khedive and the Sultan of Turkey to acknowledge him. He fought not for Allah the One and his Prophet, but for the Mahdi. That was his loss and the loss of his followers. For in Islam there is but one banner which can so rally Believers that victory becomes theirs; and that is the green banner of Islam itself. Khedive and Sultan both instructed Egypt that the Mahdi was a *kharig*, or pervert, an infidel, warring upon Islam. So Egypt fought him with your Lord Kitchener and his soldiers, and great was the fall of the Mahdi. But how if he had raised only the banner of Islam, fighting only to repel the infidel, a Jehad, and had fought always from cover, and never with his legions as standing crops for the scythes of your machinery. Think you, Muslim, Egypt had fought then under your Lord Kitchener and against Islam? Never! never! They had fought assuredly, and with your guns; but—pointed the other way, my friend. And what then of France's Algerian legions? Believe thou me, France has been asking herself that question.

"'But France holds Algeria,' you say. My friend, you see there the work, not of a winter, but of over fifty years. And here is a point for thee in that matter, the which Europe knoweth not. Thou knowest that my friend, Wold Ayadda, the Adra Sheikh, receives some $500 a month tribute from France, that he may maintain peace in his part of the territory called Algerian. There be others like him, a few. Now among all the common people in

Algeria, and *all save the learned and high officials in Morocco*, the belief is firmly fixed that this is the basis of France's occupation of Algeria. You cannot shake that conviction. 'The land is ours, by Allah's mercy, and belongs not at all to France; as witness these things, our chiefs are paid in great sums of tribute for permitting the French to reside and trade here.' Thou seest the position. The facts are what thou wilt. I tell thee of the people's fixed belief, for and by which they will fight. Hold thou that in thy mind while I tell thee why France hath not seized Figuig this winter by force of arms, though, for the success of her plans, Figuig must presently become a station (terminus for the time) of her Ain Sefra railroad, the which, through Igli, is to drain the commerce of the desert and so starve our already hungering Morocco.[1]

"Thou knowest Hadj Ali Aboutali, of the clacking tongue. That tongue of his has made the French cold to him at last. Too many have learned of the blood-money earned four years back by Hadj Ali, when he visited the Figuig oases by authority of France. France was troubled by the power of the great Figuig Shareef. Hadj Ali bore papers to him. Hadj Ali ate his bread as friend during two moons of rest and talk, there in Figuig. On the last evening, Hadj Ali mixed the tea. In the morning the Shareef sickened and died, warning his people of the cause thereof. The tea dregs, tested, proved the truth. Hadj Ali was hotly pursued, but he had started, not that day, but over-night, and upon picked horses, galloping for dear life, to—to collect his pay here in

[1] Hadj Mokdin's prophecies of two years ago are the accomplished facts of to-day.—A. J. D. Jan. 1904.

Tangier. Thou knowest he received his payment, and the Shareef troubled the infidels no more.

"Now, five days ago a cousin of Hadj Ali's arrived here from Figuig, and, over the good green tea, told me of this winter's happenings there. Briefly, this is the way of it. General Risbourg reached the neighbourhood of Figuig, a gallant soldier sick at heart and wearied to exhaustion by his advance through a country in which the wells upon his line of march were choked by retreating tribesmen who killed his animals by night and harassed him by day with many well-aimed bullets from invisible sources: the whole in a climate which, even then, was a great affliction to white men from the North. The general decided to try amicable treaty with the Sheikhs of Figuig. Now, at that very time, the two great Filali Sheikhs were closeted together with an official messenger from their Lord and ours at Marrakish. The Sultan's word was: 'Peace! War not yet upon the Christian dogs, for that were to disturb other affairs which I, thy Lord, have in hand. Fear not. The Lord of all Filalis hath his people in mind and in safe keeping. Yet, for the moment it doth not suit thy Lord to show open hostility.'

"It was an order. The Sheikhs were content; their faith in their Lord strengthened. 'Our Lord will come presently, with his armies,' they said. 'Meanwhile a smile for the infidels; bared teeth, and open hands.' Said another Sheikh: 'Yes; bared teeth, *and open hands.* It is as well that the Christians should pay while we smile, B'ísm Illah!' And, while they talked together, General Risbourg's messengers approached. Now the Figuig Sheikhs wax fat and lazy, and the ornaments of their dancing girls come

out of Algeria, paid for in French money. And France feels that the summer withdrawal of troops may be faced with complaisance. B'ísm Illah! Those who till the earth in France must needs pay for French vanity. It was written. And the tribesmen smile, for they have heard that, from the Gharb to the Atlas word hath gone forth among the Kaids to collect the Harka tax and proceed with their men to er-Rabat, there to await our Lord the Sultan's coming from Marrakish, on his way to the northern Court of Fez, whence, say the Tuat folk, he will assuredly descend in his might upon the oases, to sweep back the struggling tide of infidels from Algeria.[1] They do not know, as I know, that the same orders have been issued three times in the last thirteen moons, whilst our Lord still bides at Marrakish. Above all, they know nothing of our young Lord, his Court, his new Wazeer, or the maze of Sus insurrection and Marrakish intrigue. For their sakes, as well as others, I would not have the Sheikhs learn of these matters yet awhile, for when they do, French money will be powerless to stay bloodshed in the Tuat."

At this stage the letter of my friend Hadj Mokdin branched off into a vein more personal and less calculated, as I see it, to interest the general reader. Therefore I suppress the remainder of the good man's epistle and proceed forthwith to the dispatch under his seal, and of a later date, which has since reached me from the Court at Marrakish, where Hadj Mokdin now awaits the pleasure of his Lord and Allah's chosen—

[1] Those who had the Sultan's ear affirm that this actually was his programme until the Pretender, and the state of Moorish feeling he represented, intervened.—A. J. D. 1904.

Abd el Aziz IV., the youthful head of this crumbling realm. Hadj Mokdin's views, as given here, are not European. Yet they are vastly nearer to the best-informed European point of view than is the typical Moorish outlook, by token that Hadj Mokdin is one of an ever-decreasing minority in this naturally blessed land of human poverty and natural decadence; he is a broad-minded, observant and intelligent man of letters, void of the fanatic taint and mentally virile. It were hard to exaggerate in pointing out the sad and extreme rarity among latter-day Moors of minds like Hadj Mokdin's. Among European students of this people there are to be found some optimistic enough to affirm that if in the person of any one Moor there could be found Hadj Mokdin's intellectual gifts, allied to individual ambition and the leader's instinct, hope might reasonably be entertained of the building up, from the present invertebrate ruin called Morocco, a new and living empire worthy of the powerful Moorish tradition. It is certain that even modern Moors will do much at the bidding of a genuine live leader, having their own blood in his veins; and that at present the listless body of the people altogether lacks a head. But, granting to them much offensive and defensive potential vigour under inspired leadership, the open-minded student of this people must needs admit regretful dubiety if called upon to forecast their capabilities in the direction of peaceful self-administration. "Given the right leader," says a Syrian friend of mine, who has handled human raw material in the desert, and knows his Arab as clubmen know Pall Mall, "the Moors might go anywhere; ay, even into the citadels of Spain again, by virtue of guns, horses, and the banner of Islam. But, once

there, they would fall to sleeping, singing and tea-drinking, till their prize was drawn from them again." Truly the arts of peace form the one, the essential foundation upon which the fabric of a modern nation must rest; they form the binding mortar lacking which the winds of modern civilisation will inevitably set the bravest structure a-crumbling into decay.

I pass over the somewhat unusually drawn-out preliminaries of Hadj Mokdin's letter from the royal city of Marrakish. The essence of it runs in thus wise:—

"Here at the Court of our Lord is very much that grieveth me, and nought as yet that brings light to my heart. That our Lord hath apparently forgotten having sent for Hadj Mokdin is as nothing—a date-stone. That Allah's chosen and those about him should forget the land of the Moors, its history and its present place upon the edge of disaster; these be matters which grieve me more than any word of mine may tell. It is without doubt written, and the Will, yet—B'ism Illah! I know something of the mass of my countrymen, and in my heart's heart I am made sick.

"You know, my friend, that Moulai Hassan, the late Sultan, now occupying a high place in Paradise, was a strong man. Ah, how prettily he held the strings of Morocco's main defences, the which, as you know, are the international jealousies of Europe! And more, he was a strong man in the administration of this land; too wise to fancy he might rule by European methods, and, withal, wise and strong enough to glean what benefit he might from the wisdom of others, and to apply the same with a velvet-covered hand of very steel. Scarcely less

strong was Ba Ahmed, the chosen right arm of the Sultan. So strong and so resourceful, this great Wazeer, that when his Master died, while journeying, Ba Ahmed kept the secret, bearing his Lord's corpse in a litter, and ordering meals for the dead Sultan, through many days, till the safety of city walls was attained, the Court settled, and all things prepared for the proclamation of young Abd el Aziz's accession. A great Wazeer, for Morocco, was Ba Ahmed. And, up till the day of his death last year, he ruled Morocco, and the young Sultan, his Lord, cruelly you Europeans would say, strongly, and as Moors must be ruled for cohesion's sake, say we who know, and as his dead Lord had ruled. And then Ba Ahmed died, as was written. Waili! An ill day for Al Moghreb.

"Then came the true accession of our young Lord Abd el Aziz IV., whom may Allah fortify as He hath chosen. Then stepped out from behind the Throne a power hitherto silent, unseen of men: Lalla R'kia, the Circassian mother of our Lord; subtle, disturbing, our Lord's reminder of the blood in his veins that is other than Moorish. To-day, by Allah and His Prophet, a man may weep to see the weekly, daily warring in our Lord of the two streams; the heights 'twixt which, falling, he lieth prone, missing the good in both. Our Lord, then, being thus and not otherwise, one wastes no time in idle meditation upon what the future may hold in its hand. That which is written, Allah in his wisdom permitteth no man to know until the event discloses it. Turn we, who think, to the companions of our Lord's right hand, the human flies that hover about the Presence. Our Lord is such that these, under Allah, have the shaping of the future for him.

"Now there is Corony Maclean (Colonel Maclean, C.M.G., or, as he is more generally called, Kaid Maclean, the British instructor of the Sultan's troops, and unofficial political resident at Marrakish), he is a countryman of thine, and I am the more glad to say that, to my knowledge, he has worked no ill but rather, it may be, some good at Court. I deal not in idle compliments. I do not say the Corony is a great patriot, still less a saviour of Morocco. But an honourable man is a good influence, and I believe that Corony Maclean has not served his own interests in Marrakish other than honourably. What shall I say of the Frenchman and the French protected Jew, the commercial agents at the Court? This I will say, that they have achieved so much, that here in Marrakish, true Believers must withdraw to the privacy of their own apartments to curse these two. They and their influence may not, without dire risk, be openly reviled. And the most of Moors are moved in their hearts to revile these men. Nay, through them, we draw near the stage at which our Lord himself must and will be reviled and held cheaply in his subjects' eyes.[1]

"My friend, they play upon the weakest strain in one of the streams from our Lord's heart which fill his body. They have drawn him from the honest attempt to grapple with affairs of state (affairs crying aloud to be handled firmly), to trifle with their accursed mechanical toys. From these to Paris gauds, nameless things, to us unclean. At least, they be things the which Kaid Maclean would not procure. From these to an imported French circus, a troupe of French girls;

[1] The absolute truth of this prophecy has been pitifully established at Fez.—A. J. D. 1904.

dancers they are called. Allah protect us! Upon their neglected graves whelps of the Sôk will without doubt be encouraged to gambol. Unveiled temptations, fatherless, a call to outer darkness.

"Read this thinkingly, with your understanding eyes, friend, for somewhat ye know of our land, its people, and ye will accordingly grieve with me. Many days before I reached the Court, some folk came here (a long journey, as thou knowest) to petition our Lord in the matter of a certain water supply, the which they were like to lose to Christians; a long story. Our Lord sent them sheep, candles and tea, with word that he would presently see them. Turned he again then to the Paris toys. Weeks passed. Two days ago I was admitted to the palace grounds, with the headman of this deputation. Our Lord, busy with Paris toys, spoke impatiently to those Nazarenes about him. Theirs was the framing of the message sent to the deputation. That night I read the letter sent by the deputation to the tribe in Anjorra, whose cause they served. 'Be not impatient,' it said, 'our Lord has treated us with great favour, as witness the enclosed sealed paper from his Eyebrow (Chamberlain) which tells that our Lord's soldiers, having fought and defeated the French with great slaughter, in the South, have sent to our Lord much treasure and 300 French ladies. For the time our Lord is accordingly much occupied. Be not impatient.'[1]

"Would ye hear, my friend, how and why the change in the Wazeerate which placed Kaid Mennebhi

[1] This is no fictive decoration. The precious document was examined by a well-known English gentleman in Tangier, State Secretary's seals, royal stamp, and all.—A. J. D.

at the head of affairs came about? The ex-Grand Wazeer happened inopportunely into the Presence when our Lord was being started upon a bicycle by one of the infidels. To him, true Muslim and a Moor of the Moors, the sight was revolting, indecent. Thinking of the inevitable effect of such things in sapping our Lord's authority, he ventured upon remonstrance. What followed thou knowest. A mission, a journey, swift-riding followers from the palace, heavy chains and a seat upon a mule's back; and now the ex-Wazeer lies rotting in prison.

"And of what like is his successor? Friend, he hath greater strength, somewhat greater cunning, full measure, and of honesty no little grain beyond that brazen sort which permits of his self-seeking and dishonesty being shown to Marrakish, with never a shred of disguise. He has shown me what Morocco has never seen before: the public sale by public auction of Kaids' and Bashas' posts to the highest bidder, followed by the selling of that highest bidder (in three cases) within twelve days, himself into prison, his new-bought post to one who paid a yet higher price. Never before has that been done openly.

"To sum all up, my friend, I grieve because I find the affairs of my native land in parlous order, demanding, as never before in the history of Morocco, the guidance of a strong, clear mind, a veritable Sultan. That my country's affairs most urgently need. They have a governing power composed of half-a-dozen corrupt creatures of a corrupt, short-sighted, cruel, and desperately greedy Wazeer, whose rightful Lord is occupied exclusively in—Bah! We have spoken of those whose graves will be defiled, and of the trumpery gauds from Paris bazaars. And this, while

the turbulent Sus is aflame, the far south-east a volcano, a mine charged by French aggression, waiting only the match of knowledge of our Lord's indifference; the country betwixt Tafilet and Fás is openly given over to brigandage and anarchy; and even El Ksar, Arzila and the Gharb, Tangier's outskirts, are full of unrest and disorder, crimes and indifference to crimes.[1]

"And over and through it all, my friend, I catch the glint of the hungry, determined eyes of the Power that holds Algeria, falling across my Moghreb's deadly weaknesses, even as the piercing brilliance of the search-lights on that nation's ships of war have swept across the crumbling gaps in Tangier's walls, while I sat on mine own roof, reflecting upon the sorry end which would seem to have been written as the destiny of the Moorish Empire. That grieves me, oh, assuredly it grieves me, my friend. But would you know what thing it is that trickleth like slow, still poison into my heart, deadening the life there, and preparing me to face my written end with—not with gladness—with tired sorrow, yet as one approaching release? It is this conviction: that my beloved land is ripe fruit, near, terribly near to one infidel nation's grip, not so much by reason of England's curious aloofness, not entirely because of the strength-sapping influences at work upon our young Sultan, not at all because we lack machine guns, but because, by Allah the One and his Holy Prophet, our race is run, my friend, and we that be Moors are falling, falling beside the way of man's journey across this world. B'ísm Illah!"

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[1] Reference even to the telegraphic news in European journals during the month of May will amply justify these statements.

The end of Hadj Mokdin's letter is personal, and I have little heart to transcribe more of it. All that I have given here is truly his, and that without embellishment. His name I have altered. That I owe to him. The rest is as he wrote it, and given here for the reason that, at this stage of its decline, the views of a thinking Moor upon the situation of his country should deserve consideration.

MOROCCO, THE MOORS AND THE POWERS[1]

MOROCCO is no wanton lover, careless or free with her favours; but rather a somewhat sphinx-like mistress, with eyes voluptuously half-closed, and a personality that reveals her charms gradually, obscurely, and, to the uninitiate, quite sparingly. Here is no glittering Casino, or incontinently-smiling Plage. "Admire me, court me if you will," murmurs the Afternoon Land; "or—leave me and go hence no wiser than you came. You will in any case do the thing which is written, and that only. One thing is not written, and shall not be: you cannot disturb me; for I am Al Moghreb of the Believers; upon my left breast lies the Garden of the Hesperides; my garland is of the lotus flower; as Carthaginian Hanno found me five centuries before the coming of the Nazarene Mahdi, or ever Moulai Idrees raised upon my shoulder the green flag of Islam, so am I to-day and shall be to-morrow. B'ísm Illah!"

So one might imagine the essential spirit of Morocco addressing that remote antithesis which the maps assure us is its near neighbour: the spirit of Europe. So the mass of Moors may be said to feel and think. The error is scarcely less grotesque, and not at all less pathetic, than is many another feature of this

[1] Published in the *Fortnightly Review*, February 1903.

absolutely old-world and barbaric country, from whose shores one may hear the firing of modern guns in very modern Gibraltar, and see the cliffs in the shadow of which Britain's greatest admiral met his end.

During the past thousand years Morocco and the Moors have influenced Europe shrewdly. No more than one hundred years have passed since London merchants, with devout gratitude to the forthright Yankees who finally pricked the blood-red bubble of the Sallee Rover, ceased paying annual tribute to the Moorish Sultan by way of bribe to save their ships from pillage and their sailors from being captured as slaves for the Court at Marrakish or Fez. Yet it may fairly be said that Morocco and the Moors have made no more response than has Thibet to any one among the influences and events which have moulded modern Christendom and the mighty civilisation of the West. The stately mosques of bygone Moorish warriors (Christendom has nothing to excel them in dignity) are now the cathedrals of Christian Spain; but you shall look vainly in Morocco for traces of European growth and change, or even for a genuine convert (in full possession of his mental faculties) to any European faith. Upon the coast you may happen upon some few moderns among Moors who have added certain European vices to their own sufficiently-comprehensive list. Modernity and decadence, beyond the average acute, are synonymous in Morocco. But this scarcely touches the broad fact, which is that in all Northern Africa Morocco remains the one corner as yet unexploited, uninfluenced, unappropriated by civilisation. Yet, both strategically and physically, it must at once be acknowledged of far greater importance in the eyes of European nations than any part of South

Africa; and this most notably in the regard of any great maritime Power of the North. Gibraltar is but one of the two pillars of Hercules.

Regarding its intrinsic value, one can affirm little beyond the obvious facts that it is abundantly fertile, richly endowed as to climate and coast, hill and river, and, that rarest of all things to-day, a virgin land, unravaged by the miner, and no more than idly coaxed and cozened by the agriculturist. As the granary of some overcrowded European country it were hard to find the equal of Morocco. Gold, silver, antimony, copper, iron, these are among many treasures which Sunset Land is known to hold in her lap, stores upon which no man has drawn to any appreciable extent.

Turning to the people, the race which occupies this still veiled shoulder of the continent that civilisation has for the most part made naked, one finds traces and to spare of change and movement, but never a hint of a step toward Europe or its standards of progress. The cave-dwelling Berbers discovered in possession—and used with consummate generalship as soldiers by the men who, fleeing from the Mecca of Mohammed's day, founded a Moorish dynasty—remain to-day the same hardy, rock-scaling, semi-savages who resented the Muslim intrusion of a thousand years ago. They are precisely the same men, living in precisely the same way, and they are occupying themselves at this moment as they were occupied then; the same blind, fierce resentment, the same dogged, savage insurrection, the same methods of making both felt. But with the Moors proper, the ruling people of Morocco, matters are far otherwise. Young Abd el Aziz, the present Sultan—

prisoner, one had almost written—at Fez, is scarcely more capable of dealing with the rebellious mountaineers and fanatics of his realm after the crushing, masterful manner of his ancestors, than he and his subjects are capable of re-taking and occupying the capitals of Andalusia.

And that brings one to what is at once the most striking and the most momentous consideration which occupies the minds of understanding students of the Moorish race and the Moorish Empire—their unmistakable and essential decadence.

Human and animal, political and material, national and individual, steady, inexorable, pathetic and unredeemed, the deterioration is writ large and clear, and the man who studies may not fail to read and admit the grievous thing, however reluctantly. Indeed, the most reluctant, the most generously partial, are the most assured, the men who have most loyally and affectionately served the Moors, are the men most clearly convinced of this unhappy truth. For they have learned the most. They have learned, to name one among examples the proper enumeration of which would fill a volume, that the national spirit is absolutely and entirely defunct among Moors. It has not suffered an eclipse; it is non-existent. A very cursory study of the history of the Moorish people, in Spain particularly, will suggest to the average mind that the citizen spirit never did exist among them. It certainly has not even a traditional significance to the modern Moor, whose outlook but barely embraces even the co-operation of the village community, and is absolutely indifferent to the fate of warring tribes separated by a range of hills from his own. "When they," the attacking party, "reach my

town—you will see!" he says; and listlessly resumes his avocation, be it wayside robbery, desultory earth-tilling, hunting, begging, or sitting at the receipt of extorted tribute, a Saint or a Basha.

Mentally, morally and physically, the Moor is developing along a downward line. Individual freedom from the taint of deplorable physical disease is exceptional; from the taint of racial and national corruption and decay no Moor is free.

"One gleam I see, not of hope, but of relief from the general murkiness," says an authority of life-long experience. "The Moor is as yet, broadly speaking, clear of the liquor curse, a fact for which he has to thank the real and living faith of Islam. Acting upon a body so diseased, alcoholism would mean complete disintegration in Morocco."

Yet another authority, whose intimate knowledge, and shoulder-to-shoulder daily experience of Moors in that singular and now vanished outpost of civilisation, the Cape Juby Trading Station, makes his opinions of value, said to the writer of these lines a year ago:—

"Yes, they are hopelessly decadent, and have no national feeling; but given a leader, a strong leader, Moors could and would achieve wonders under arms. For industrial development and the arts of peace I won't say. But fighting for a cause, under an inspiring leader, with a religious war-cry, the Moors would yet go far."

Ba Hamára, the Father of the She-Ass and

pretender to the Shareefian Parasol, is a leader not altogether without talent; that he has proved. Religion has entered into his cause, for he has given out, or allowed his following to give out, that he is the forerunner of the veritable Mahdi of Islam. He has a fine war-cry, rich in traditional inspiration: "Down with the Nazarenes, who have twisted your mock Sultan round their finger ends, and are creeping in upon us with their accursed, devil-sent inventions and customs of the infidel!"

But, when all is said, the man is never more than a symptom of the times. The times, and the mainsprings of the times; they are the things.

Regarded as a Moorish ruler and leader, the late Sultan, Moulai Hassan, was a strong man—almost, perhaps, a great man. The loss of Morocco is that apparently she cannot produce his like in the present generation. She was richer a few years ago; and that is part of her decadence. Moulai Hassan had a companion of his right hand: Ba Ahmed, the Grand Wazeer. In them Morocco could boast the possession of two strong men; crude, narrow of vision, even brutal and merciless, if judged by European standards, yet genuinely strong men. The greater of them died, and his subordinate successfully hid the fact until preparations were made and the succession of the youth, Abd el Aziz, assured. Be it remembered that Ba Ahmed, the survivor, was a strong man in his own right. Young Abd el Aziz was docile perforce, and Ba Ahmed ruled, without pity, with greed, and quite unhampered by what Europe calls honour or justice. Also, he ruled without weakness, cherishing in safety that mysterious condition which is called the *status quo* in Morocco, and thereby conserving to his

THE WHITE ROOFS OF THE FIRST AND LAST TOWN SEEN BY THE VISITOR TO MOROCCO: TANGIER

country its first and only line of defence, which is, and for long has been, the naturally watchful and more than a little jealous rivalry of those European nations who wait beside the couch of her mortal sickness.

Rather more than two years ago, when already the country was perturbed by news of the French advance upon and occupation of Igli, the Moorish town which was regarded as the depot and junction *viâ* which the caravan traffic of the desert filtered through Morocco to the coast, at this critical juncture, in the thick of conflicting intrigues, poisonings and official treachery, Ba Ahmed, the greatly feared, greatly hated and rigidly-obeyed Wazeer, died at Marrakish, leaving many scheming heirs-presumptive to his office, but no single successor to the mantle of his authority, the inherent masterfulness of his personality.

Still, youthful Abd el Aziz IV. stretched forth both hands and personally took up the fallen reins of government with a great flourish of trumpets and display of energy. He would be his own Wazeer, said the young Sultan. It seemed the young man rejoiced to win clear of his swaddling clothes, the rigid tutelage of Ba Ahmed. Reflecting upon the Sultan's youth and breeding, men marvelled at the flourish of trumpets, and optimistic Europeans, naturally gratified by the active good sense with which Abd el Aziz checked his Filali tribesmen's turbulent resentment of contact with the French in Igli and its oasis, freely predicted a new lease of life for the Moorish Empire. They credited the new broom with powers which, in view of its origin and environment, had been little short of miraculous. And they omitted reflection

regarding the hand which moved the new broom. This was a power behind the Parasol, a latent intelligence, not wholly Moorish, capricious, feminine, subtle, unstable, and somewhat vitiated from long repression in an unwholesome atmosphere. The late Moulai Hassan's Circassian wife, young Abd el Aziz's mother, Lalla R'kia, had also found a dangerous emancipation in the death of Ba Ahmed.

These were stirring days that saw the sweeping out in the summer of 1900 of that far-off Court among the tangled gardens and ruined palaces of Marrakish, the residents of which are, in all other senses than the geographical, immeasurably farther distant from Europe than are the denizens of the remotest mining camp in the Antipodes. Corrupt officials (to be frank, there are no other kinds in Marrakish), made somewhat bewildered, much relieved, and feverishly eager for plunder, by the departure of the stern master-plunderer, whom all had respected as well as envied and hated; timid, servile neophytes in the game of oppression, cruelty and "squeezing"; bloated ministers whom Ba Ahmed had found worth fattening, lieutenants ambitious for dishonesty's laurels, and plain, steady-going holders of place, who, judged by Marrakish standards, kept their hands clean; all alike were vitally affected and disturbed, frightened and jostled out of their respective ruts, by Abd el Aziz's sudden, energetic bound into his Sultan's *rôle*. And the pale woman behind the throne, with her faded repute for beauty — the student of Oriental character, the observer of racial laws and their outworking, would give much to know exactly what the trend and tenor of her mind, so prolific of elaborate yet infinitely-circumscribed intrigue, may have been at

this time. Who shall say what swiftly-soaring hopes may have dwindled and fallen into resigned paltriness in the brain of that racially-handicapped woman? what sudden, climbing ambitions may have tripped and slid into the venal quagmire of routine in that barbaric headquarters of Moorish corruption and decadence?

Casually-observant Nazarenes saw rich, cruel officials swept from their high estate by wholesale, and predicted the birth of probity at Court. Notorious gainers by oppression were loaded with chains in Kasbah dungeons; the young Sultan's brother, the One-Eyed, whom cautious Ba Ahmed had kept secure in Tetuan prison, was established on parole at Mequinez, and, "Here's positive purity of administration!" cried the surface-reading hopeful in Christian-ridden Tangier.

Of a sudden, all movement ceased. The young Sultan was lost sight of—behind the curtain. Trembling officials still at large, and flushed beginners upon the cushions of the wights imprisoned, drew long breaths, sipped tea once more, gave the praise to Allah, smoothed their plumage, and, for the nonce, began to regard their shadows with equanimity.

The understanding Europeans in Morocco shrugged their shoulders: a gesture forced upon the understanding Europeans in Morocco by that most unyielding of all sultans whom we name Experience. It is not given to us to know anything of pale Lalla R'kia's attitude during this breathing space. Certainly the Circassian summer of her vigour and beauty had waned or ever the Wazeer's death brought about her meteor-like ascent as an indirect ruling power. One remembers regretfully the ener-

vating, cloying insistence of hareem influences and ties; one learns of the extravagant importation of sweets, silk stuffs and gauds, and perforce one sighs adieu to the woman behind the Parasol, with her subtle, conflicting strain of blood other than that of those about her.

(Lalla R'kia died last year.)

Speaking metaphorically, his Shareefian Majesty Abd el Aziz reappeared on the arm of a commercial agent, a French Israelite with a genius for the "placing" of imported commodities. Allah's Chosen had been initiated into the select manias of Europe, and become addicted to golfing, the use of the camera, the bicycle, and other less pretty pastimes from the West. Deftness and alert curiosity came to him from his beautiful slave-born mother, and there were Christians who judged him accordingly an enlightened young man.

Two other things happened. The tiger, which lives still and is the essence, the fibre of the decadent Moorish people, began to snarl ominously. The beast is doubtless well-nigh spent, but yet lives, and will live, while Moors walk the earth. And he snarled, as was to be expected, at sight of the infidel with his devil-sent picture-machines in the Sacred Presence. Other happenings are described in a letter received by the writer from Marrakish at this time:—

"As by this time even you in Tangier will have gathered, the Sultan has entirely put aside his very short-lived efforts to grapple seriously with the present critical situation. The Sus is ablaze with insurrection; pillage and general lawlessness are very ripe in all parts of the country; Mequinez is now the home

of quite a little colony of disaffected powers, Sheikhs, and men with followings, headed by the incorrigible and crafty One-Eyed One, Moulai Mohammed; the country about Fez is openly in arms, its people frankly indifferent to the Sultan's authority; the Filalis, the Sultan's own folk, in the Tafilet oases, are near the end of their tether, and will probably not long be withheld from suicidal attacks upon the French, unless the Sultan's promise to move the Court to Fez is fulfilled. And of that there is no sign at present, affairs of State being left to wait upon the affairs of Parisian shop-keepers. The bicycle and the camera (so deadly offensive to the best and most solid among Moorish people) are still delights, but are only prevented from palling upon the sacred palate by being served sandwich-wise—camera, bicycle and mechanical toys as bread, a circus, and some Paris dancing-girls, the savoury essence of the dish. It is a sorry business, not only making for the very reverse of the personal enlightenment your friends so naïvely enlarge upon, but stirring up in the Moors who know all the drowsy savagery and fanatical bitterness of which they are capable at this stage of their decline. Further, whilst effectually preventing the Sultan from attending to the finances or administration of the country, even in the most perfunctory manner, it sets up in him an unending thirst for money, and provides a deep channel for the dissipation of funds; deep, I mean, when one considers the very limited nature of the supply."

But commercial agents continued to press upon the young Sultan the latest and most expensive of electrical and other toys, and those far-seeing gentle-

men—the newspaper correspondents—bade Europe take note of the remarkable enlightenment and progressive wisdom of the ruler of Morocco, as evidenced by his interest in motor cars and Broadwood pianos.

A mission was sent to England from the Sultan's Court, headed by Kaid Meheddi el Mennebhi (now Minister of War and prime favourite), a man of lowly origin and great personal ambition. And here certain remarks fall to be made as a duty, a thankless and unpleasant task, but a duty which the writer cannot bring himself to shirk. Mennebhi was received in England with every possible courtesy as the ambassador of the Sultan of Morocco; and that, no doubt, was as it should be. But certain tributes were paid to him which never should have been paid, though the visitor had been the young Sultan himself. News of these things went abroad throughout Morocco, and were gossiped over by the ignorant at every city gate, inevitable deductions being drawn therefrom, the humiliating nature of which can, perhaps, only be realised by men who have lived in Oriental countries; certainly the inferences drawn were not such as the British Government would have cared to have drawn, the impression produced was one which England ought never to have produced in Morocco.

Mennebhi was met on landing by the highest officers of the Court of St James's, who were induced to stand aside and turn their backs whilst carriages conveying Mennebhi's slave-women were driven past them; slave women whom any street idler in Marrakish has seen many times. A Moor would never dream of taking his wives abroad. When received at Court by the King and Queen of Britain,

the Sovereigns of the greatest Empire in the world, the newly-risen Mennebhi was allowed to appear *in his slippers with the hood of his djellab raised.* Small matters these, the stay-at-home Britisher may say. Let him ask any British officer who has served in India, and learn just what these small matters mean. Let him consider that Mennebhi would never venture to enter the apartments of his own scribe in Morocco in such a guise. Let him inquire as to the manner in which the accredited representatives of European monarchs are received at the Moorish Court. Let him picture a British Ambassador being received in audience at Potsdam with a cigar in his mouth, his coat collar turned up, and his hat on his head. And finally, let him bear in mind that no European can realise quite fully how much these things weigh with Orientals.

But the writer would not be understood to argue that no advantage was taken of the young Sultan's leaning towards things European, save by commercial agents, and, according to this month's reports from Fez, the pushfulness of at least one gentleman whose training and position should have placed him above such mercenary trafficking. The British Government is represented in Morocco by a Minister whose heart is in his work, and whose heart is thoroughly kind and good. The late Sir John Drummond Hay may have been more feared than is Sir Arthur Nicolson, but he certainly was not more generally respected and admired in Morocco. And Sir Arthur Nicolson has well earned his high standing. His influence has been entirely for good, for progress and for humanity, in Morocco; and all credit is due to him for his strenuous efforts to ameliorate the conditions under which the Moorish people live and are oppressed. The mitiga-

tion of prison horrors, the recent attempt to establish taxation upon a basis of something like fairness and justice—these things, and not at all his unfortunate and indiscreet trifling with the toys of civilisation, are what the Sultan and all right-minded men have to thank Sir Arthur Nicolson for. It may well be that, like a good many other people, our Minister was a little deceived by the successes of the toy-selling gentry, and that in consequence his influence made for progress of a somewhat too rapid and premature description. But the writer will not assert it, and, in any case, it were an error on the generous side, and a far remove from the dangerous indiscretions of various European travellers and adventurers in Morocco, which have done much toward fanning, if not lighting, the present blaze of insurrection in Sunset Land. Our Minister in Morocco has served Britain as the greatest Power of civilisation should be served, and he has been backed by a remarkable amount of ignorance and indifference in England.

Having said so much, the writer may add that, whether or not the Moors as a people are ripe for the introduction of reforms in their administration upon the European plan, it is quite certain that they do not desire them, and that their officials, whilst servants of an independent Moorish Government, will not permit these reforms to make either for honesty of administration, for the profit of the Shareefian treasury, or for the benefit of unofficial Moorish subjects. This is quite certain. Just, equitable and honest taxation, for example, may, with great care and unceasing vigilance, be introduced into an Indian Native state, because of that great and powerful institution which is called the Government of India. It cannot be intro-

duced into Moorish-governed Morocco, for in Morocco there is no British Raj to be appealed to. The British Resident at the most entirely exemplary Native Court in all India would understand this at a glance. Withal, one has only cordial sympathy and admiration for those men who strive against great odds to bring about such reforms, even in Morocco. That is the part that Britain has been officially playing, through her Minister, in Morocco. But Moors do not resent these things; they merely shrug their shoulders. They bitterly resent the motor cars, however, and the Sultan's daily chaffering and companionship with Europeans at his Court, with Europeans of no official standing and with purely selfish ends to serve.

When at length the Sultan's long-promised removal of his Court from far south-western Marrakish to north-eastern Fez did take place, a temporary improvement, a sort of waiting calm, set in. Moors and Christians alike, as it were, stepped back to study the effect. The presence of the Court means the presence of the Shareefian army, the only body of regulars in Morocco. All sorts and conditions of law-breakers, robbers and revolutionaries, grown first impatient, then sceptical, and finally insolently unbelieving in the matter of the promised establishment of the Court at Fez, were now prepared to bow the knee, to respond in peace to the only sort of authority which is real in Morocco; the living, visible force represented by the person of a Sultan surrounded by his army. Peace was firmly established, and the young Sultan was a truly great and enlightened ruler, pronounced the optimistic European observers and the surface rumour-gleaning newspaper correspondents. The commercial agents

set to work with redoubled ardour, and vied with one another in their performances before the Lord of the Faithful. One induced the young man to use European saddlery in public; straightway another led the monarch to appear in English riding-boots; then both were outdone by a gentleman who prevailed upon Abd el Aziz to be photographed in the act of shaking hands with him in familiar European fashion. All these matters, and many more glaring indiscretions, went to form the subject of city-gate gossip, and were duly embroidered and enlarged upon by market-place idlers, who, when doubted, would point to some small real move in the direction of reform, some little administrative improvement urged upon the Sultan and actually brought about by gentlemen of the Foreign Legations, who had no concern whatever with the trading mountebanks then lining their pockets at Court.

"What? You don't believe that our Lord is in league with the Nazarenes? You doubt me when I tell you that he is forsaking Islam for the faith of the pig-eaters? Well, what do you say to this order about taxation, then—straight from the Bashadors of the infidels, b'Allah! See for yourself!"

The Sultan's presence was positively weakening his authority, sapping the adherence of his people, by reason that it made his daily doings and associations apparent; and that was a state of affairs without precedent in Moorish history. The obvious European comment upon this, of course, is that it showed the hopeless bigotry and fanaticism of the Moors. In speaking to the writer of these lines an intelligent Moor answered that comment in this wise :—

"Can you deny that the best class of Moors, mentally, morally and physically, are those who decline to have any dealings with foreigners and infidels?"

For the writer's part, he knew too much of Morocco to deny this. "Are not the lowest and most worthless among Moors those of the coast towns who have daily intercourse with the Nazarenes?" The writer was bound to admit it. "Do you not always mistrust a Moor you do not know if he has any words of English, or shows any familiarity with European customs?" The writer knew that such a Moor would not even be engaged as a groom by a European who knew anything of life in Morocco.

The intelligent Moor feels instinctively that when European methods and customs are introduced into Morocco, when the country is thrown open to European industry and speculation, it will cease to be the independent Empire of the Faithful. *And he is right.* There remains a great deal to be said, an endless amount to be written, on the side of Europe and civilisation. But, so far, the Moor is right. And, that being so, it should be easy to understand that what Europe calls savage fanaticism and bigotry is to him no more than the patriotism of self-preservation, the piety of living faith in his religion. Some of us, respectable, once-a-week Christians, are apt to forget what a real, living, every-day, life and death faith is that of Islam to its followers.

It has been said that these doings of the young Sultan, which earned him so many good-humoured, stupid pats on the back from journalists whose views run in stereotyped and traditional grooves, became

the common talk of the most remote sôks and city gates. They presently reached the ears of a Moor named Jellali of Zarahun, known to some as Omar Zarzouni, a man of peasant origin, yet a fellow of some parts, and one who had seen more of the world than the most of his fellows. He had travelled through a large part of Northern Africa afoot, and in the course of time had become a very accomplished conjurer, a master of legerdemain, and, from the Moorish standpoint, of the arts of magic. Now, from the magician to the saint is no great step in Morocco, and to the saint all things are possible. Genealogical trees are carried in men's minds instead of upon parchment in Sunset Land, and Shareefs or descendants of the Prophet are at least numerous as one-eyed men, which is to say, that one may find them in every city street and in every village. But Jellali, or Omar, was a man of some parts, and had ambition. To collect battered floos by the aid of a green flag and a couple of reed-players was no career for him. He fancied he had it in him to be a leader of men, and, being the observant fellow he was, he realised that he must have a cause and a war-cry if he were to succeed in this capacity. So Jellali pondered these things among the hills, surrounded by a handful of simple Berbers, by whom his juggling tricks were regarded as evidences of his supernatural powers as a magician, and proofs of his remarkable sanctity as a f'keeh and a holy man.

Then inspiration came to this adventurer, and, seated with saintly humility upon a small ass, he rode forth among the cave-dwelling mountaineers, a fully-equipped prophet with a fine, stirring watchword: "Down with the Nazarenes! Morocco for the Faith-

ful! Down with the renegade mock Sultan, who seeks to give us over to the infidels!" Ba Hamára, or Father of the She-Ass, they called him then; and the hardy mountain men, unchanged since the days of their forebears, who fought to stem the Arab invasion of their hills a thousand years ago, rallied about him with enthusiasm, while the story-tellers among them, obeying their primitive instincts—instincts not yet defunct in Clapton—began forthwith to weave about their leader's head a halo of legend and romance, even as Christians, early and late, have done in other lands. The touch of his hands would turn bullets aside from the persons of his adherents. He could draw money from out the air. And so on, in ever-increasing volume and picturesqueness, till one day:—

"He is the fore-runner of the veritable Mahdi. He will lead us into Fez, and discover the Mahdi's sword of flame in a pillar of the Karueen. The Master of the Hour will appear; the infidels will be driven into the sea, and the flag of Islam will rule the world!"

The Father of the She-Ass did not forget the man who first set this glory upon his head: be sure that inspired soul was well rewarded. And the following grew apace. Still, it was hardly the sort of following by which capital cities are sacked and monarchs dethroned. "After all—our Lord, the Lofty Portal, is still his father's son—may Allah have pardoned him!—and through him the Child of the Prophet," said the stolid tillers of the valleys. (They have not that repute, yet history proves the Moors to have been ever the most enduringly loyal subjects, in so far as avoiding revolution makes men loyal, even

under the most barbarously tyrannical rulers. The throne is not much to your orthodox Moor, but the Sultan is Khaleef, and the Khaleef is the Child of Mohammed, and acknowledged Lord of all the Faithful. (Turkey's present claim to the Khaleefate is no more recognised by Moors than it is by genealogical students; temporal power alone supports it.)

Readers of newspapers in Europe who have picked out certain facts from among the gloriously inaccurate, but frequently picturesque, reports from Morocco, have learned how at this stage fortune favoured the self-made Saint of the She-Ass. An ignorant mountaineer (quite possibly a follower of Ba Hamára's), walking through Fez one day, raised his gun, fired at an Englishman he had never before set eyes upon, and killed him. The mountain man fled at once to the most venerated sanctuary in all Morocco; he took refuge among the sacred pillars of the Karueen, where, according to all the traditions of a thousand years, his person was as safe and inviolable as that of his Lord beneath the Shareefian Parasol.

There is no doubt in the minds of men who know as to who influenced the young Sultan in the daring, unprecedented step he then took. Besides Kaid Sir Harry Maclean (whose experience in the country would never have permitted of his advising the course adopted), another countryman of the murdered missionary was with the Sultan, and he has made no secret of the part he played. A wise and altogether good part, the average Englishman might say: and the average Englishman might be partly wrong. By the Sultan's order, carried out in dumb amazement by men not given to questioning, the fanatic murderer was dragged from sanctuary, flogged round the town,

and publicly executed directly after Mr Cooper succumbed to his injuries.

"If only the thing had been done Moslem fashion, if private instructions had been issued to prevent the man's escape, and then, a few weeks later, he had been flung into prison, having been lured from sanctuary by stratagem, and subsequently executed—as much as you like!" sighed an elderly, peace-loving f'keeh in Tangier to the writer of these lines, in December. "But to drag a Believer out of sanctuary, at the bidding of beardless Nazarenes, for—for killing a — ha — h'm — pardon — a Nazarene! Ih-yeh, but that was a bitter bad dealing for our Lord the Sultan."

You may be very sure it was not in any such mild strain as this that Ba Hamára commented to his following upon the event, in the Berber fastnesses to the south-east of Fez. No other man in Morocco could have served the Pretender's cause quite so well and opportunely as Moulai Abd el Aziz and his Christian advisers had served it, in dragging out from sanctuary the murderer of the unfortunate Mr Cooper. From far outlying kasbahs and from villages at his feet, from every part of the turbulent south-east, and from the exacerbated villages of the Tuat oases—where men were already stung to madness, deliberately, or unwittingly, by the French from over the border with their "creeping" policy of mild aggression, judicial punitive measures, and insistent advance—sober-minded Moors from the very gate of Fez itself, they flocked about the standard of the man who cried:—"Down with the Christians, and down with

the renegade Sultan who would sacrifice you all to the Kaffirs, sons of burnt Kaffirs!"

Fluent newspaper correspondents in Tangier hotels, and their yet more fluent colleagues in Madrid and Paris, have told the world much of what followed, and more that did not follow. One of them, a few days ago, told the readers of a great London daily that certain people—European ladies, no less, among them—had left Fez on January 10th and arrived safely in Tangier on January 12th, a feat that would have puzzled the owner of seven-leagued boots to accomplish, even though summer suns had made all boggy ways passable in Morocco; a thrice impossible performance, to speak plainly. Not loyalty, nor force of arms, nor statesmanship, nor any other such attribute of Royalty saved his Shareefian Majesty from ignominious defeat, though it is true that even Ba Hamára could not cut off the water supply of Fez, as the newspapers said he did. Only absence of discipline, lack of cohesion, and consequent vacillation among Ba Hamára's following preserved to Abd el Aziz his Parasol, after that fierce, before-dawn attack in the Ulad Taher valley. The followers of the Father of the She-Ass lacked singleness of purpose, and so, when the Shareefian troops followed them up with weapons of precision, they were mown down thickly between the mud walls of a kasbah, and many gory heads were carried off to decorate the gates of Fez.

"And that's the end of the Pretender," said the Europeans in Tangier. "The whole thing has been tremendously exaggerated, of course," said numerous official residents in Tangier to the writer of these lines before Christmas; "and now you will see that this is the end of it." Even the favourably placed and

generally well-informed *Times* correspondent, then actually in Fez, wrote :—

"Here in Fez, where a certain amount of mystery surrounded his name (the Pretender's name), and where the more superstitious of the population were half inclined to believe in his divine mission, his reputation is demolished, and he is the laughing-stock of the city. It needs only one look at the ghastly heads hanging on the city gate, dripping in the drizzling rain, to persuade the people that Moulai Abd el Aziz is their real lord and master."

The writer of this article, going to native sources for his information, formed a different impression, and, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, ventured to "croak" once more to the effect that Ba Hamára himself was scot-free in the mountains, and had shown himself to be the sort of man that would be heard of again. Authorities whom the writer could not doubt had shown him what a touch-and-go chance the whole affair had been, and that hundreds of the solid, conservative class of Moors in Fez, so far from viewing the situation with the loyal meekness insisted on by the *Times* correspondent, were ready and anxious to forsake their "real lord and master" the moment they thought the thing could be done with safety.

The newspaper-reading world knows now what happened; how quickly the Father of the She-Ass rallied his following and gained a distinct victory over the Sultan's troops. (A letter sent the writer from Fez says: "Had Ba Hamára followed up that success nothing could have saved the Sultan.") And then came the news that Fez was practically besieged by

the pretender. As a fact it was not quite so. Ba Hamára was five hours distant from the capital, and his following were dispersing to their homes and quarrelling over booty already gained. But the victory was undeniable and its moral effect great. Those European companions of the Sultan whose presence most offended orthodox Moors left Fez now; but they left it some months too late for the good of the young Sultan's standing. Under date January 2nd, a correspondent, whose intimate knowledge and life-long experience of Moorish people and affairs is unequalled, addressed the present writer from Tangier as follows:—

"The Sultan's present urgent danger lies in the antagonism awakened by his English advisers and associates, his assumption of their dress, amusements and familiarities—all inconsistent with his position. If, as is generally believed, Ba Hamára is backed by French assistance,[1] he will not declare a Jehad as the *Times* correspondent suggests. In Fez they are short of provisions, and, according to my Moorish informants, the populace is ill-affected; a most ominous condition of affairs. Yet it is still believed by the well-informed that the Sultan may weather the storm. I hope he may, for his sake and that of the country. He will have to cut his European aspirations and frivolities off by the board if he is to hold his own unaided by Europe. The French here are jubilant, of course; the English all depressed. The improvi-

[1] In the light of the latest news regarding a French protectorate in Morocco, I would specially draw attention to this. It is now quite certain that the Pretender did receive some European assistance. It is equally certain that, knowingly or not, he played France's own game to the great and signal advantage of France.—A. J. D.

dence of the Sultan and his advisers, and the indiscretions of some of the foreigners about his person, seem beyond belief. Still, the extent of the late disasters has been wildly exaggerated. The truth probably is that the Sultan's troops, being disaffected, simply abandoned arms and ammunition, and either went over to the insurgents (I know that some took this course) or dribbled back to Fez with wild tales of imaginary slaughter. Should Ba Hamára succeed, and Abd el Aziz be dethroned, either his brother, Moulai Mohammed (El Aour), will be proclaimed, or Moulai Mohammed, an uncle of Abd el Aziz, and a much better choice, will be selected, in which case affairs would speedily settle down for a time in the old grooves. The real danger is that when the Jebala are once up they may run amuck in despite of all efforts to restrain them; then we should sup full on horrors."

A week later, the same correspondent, with innumerable native and foreign sources of information open to him, wrote as follows:—

"The Ba Hamára rising not having yielded immediate results, a palace revolution has been concerted (Europe, I gather, calls it a shrewd stroke of policy on the Sultan's part, a comment which reads like irony) to secure the transfer of power from Moulai Abd el Aziz to Moulai Mohammed. The former has been constrained to install his long-imprisoned brother as his Khaleefa, and this has given rise to the most curious journalistic rumours, such as that the Pretender impersonated Moulai Mohammed, and so forth. The next step may come sooner or later, but I know from native officials here

that they are hourly expecting to hear from Fez that the actual transfer has been effected and that Moulai Mohammed reigns.

"The French cannot conceal their eager anxiety for the success of Moulai Mohammed and the downfall of Abd el Aziz, and they assert openly that the English are being run out, and that French influence will soon be all-powerful. They point to Mr Harris and the various English agents, travellers, adventurers and *employés* of the Court who have been frightened away from Fez after their presence, or at least the presence of the independent and influential among them, had done the Sultan such incalculable harm. To be sure, no one suspects them of deliberately doing harm, but they have done it none the less, and that chiefly by reason of their apparent inability to grasp or conform to the Oriental ideas of dignity. The Oriental will steal and lie, and yet demean himself like a prince; whilst your possibly quite honest Westerner too often degenerates into caddish licence and familiarity. It is now reported here that one of the most prominent among these doubtless unintentional offenders presented large orders on the Tangier Custom-house, on his return here from the capital, in payment for various orders he had obtained from the Sultan for electric appointments and so forth, amounting altogether to many thousands of dollars. The Moors say 80,000. Even if we strike off the last cypher it seems too large a sum for credence. The fact remains patent to all, however, that the Imperial treasury has been subjected to a depletion quite without precedent. It grieves and worries us that the English should have had any hand in such a sorry business."

Later again, under date, Tangier, January 19th, the same informant cabled to the writer these words: —

"TANGIER, *January 19th.*

"The situation is improving. So far only unimportant skirmishes between outlying scouts of the Shareefian army and the Pretender's force have taken place; but the Sultan is acting with great caution, and my opinion now is that he will weather the storm. You know the state of the roads in the interior at this season. That has materially hampered both forces, but more particularly the Sultan's, because his is the moving party. The local troubles in the neighbourhood of Tangier have settled down. The general opinion here is that Mr Harris was ill-advised to take the part he did, because Christian interference is very exasperating to the Moors at any time; more so just now than ever, and more when coming from Mr Harris, by reason of the tales of his relations with the Sultan."

Mr Walter B. Harris, the correspondent of the *Times* in Morocco, in writing to that journal, has said:—

"I merely wish to contradict the impression, which appears to be general, that I am one of those who have brought the Sultan of Morocco into his present unfortunate position by inspiring him with European ideas. No one has deprecated these ideas, or the extravagance they entailed, more strongly than I have."

The Paris correspondent of the *Times* writes to his editor that "It is difficult to say by whom the ground-

less accusation brought against your Tangier correspondent of having given the Sultan of Morocco evil counsel was originally started." It is more difficult for those who know Morocco to guess what may be the grounds for the *Times'* Paris correspondent's statements, or what he can possibly know about the influence of Mr Walter Harris in Fez. To accuse a man of giving evil counsel is tantamount to charging him with deliberate wrong-doing, and Mr Harris is by no means in need of defence from such accusations as that. But he himself must be perfectly aware that his residence at the Moorish Court, his constant association with the Sultan, their being photographed together, and so forth, have done a great deal towards inflaming the hearts of the orthodox Moors against their ruler, his foreign friends, and his progressive policy, which latter is naturally and rightly enough traced to the foreigners. The present writer has ample reason for personally admiring and respecting Mr Harris as an intrepid traveller and a most entertaining writer, but neither this nor any other consideration could blind the writer to the fact that Mr Harris's recent familiar daily intercourse and dealings with the young Sultan have helped materially to weaken the latter's hold upon his people, to rouse their jealous resentment, and to exasperate their religious feelings. Further, these things have helped more firmly to establish a conviction which is very generally held among native politicians, and which Mr Harris himself has written of to the *Times* in these words:—

"The Moors are confident, after what passed between Mennebhi, who was in London last year as

Moorish Ambassador, and Lord Lansdowne, that in case of necessity England cannot refuse to give armed assistance to Moulai Abd el Aziz. It is impossible to disabuse them of this idea, as they lay the entire responsibility for the rebellion at England's door, for fostering European ideas, and introducing Christians into the Court."

Not many of the Christians introduced at the Moorish Court were quite so prominent there as to be in familiar daily intercourse with the young Sultan, sharing his amusements, being photographed by and with him, and otherwise scandalising the Faithful, as Mr Harris did, all, no doubt, with the most innocent intentions. The common report in Tangier was that Mr Harris had been badly frightened by the state of things in Fez, and fled to Tangier as soon as danger menaced the Court at which he had been a guest. Those who have the pleasure of knowing the gentleman in question, those, particularly, who have read his *Tafilet*, that fascinating record of one of the pluckiest pieces of exploration ever undertaken by a European, will not be imposed upon by so ill-natured a rumour as this; but they, and others, will believe, with reason, that Mr Harris left the Moorish Court because it was realised, unfortunately somewhat late in the day, that his presence there seriously aggravated the difficulties of the Sultan's position.

"The Moors are confident that in case of necessity England cannot refuse to give armed assistance."

According to his telegraphic report in the *Times* of January 16th, Mr Harris was himself giving armed assistance to one of two warring tribes in the

vicinity of Tangier. This would scarcely help to "disabuse" the minds of the Moors in the matter of their confident reliance upon English assistance in case of need. It would seem that out of the goodness of his heart, and from a strong love of romance, Mr Harris continues even in Tangier, as it were by implication, to give dangerous pledges.

"The French here are jubilant, of course."

"The French here cannot conceal their eager anxiety for the success of Moulai Mohammed and the downfall of Abd el Aziz."

"The French Minister here has made representations to Hadj Mohammed Torres, the Sultan's Foreign Minister, to the effect that if the troubles near here are renewed French intervention would be justified."

"The Moors are confident that in case of necessity England cannot refuse to give armed assistance."

These are serious words from the best-informed sources. They demand the serious consideration of European statesmen. The European nations most intimately concerned are England and France. There is not the slightest doubt that the whole matter of the Moorish situation receives, and has received without intermission for years past, the very closest attention on the Quai d'Orsay. The past has not proven that Downing Street is as keenly alive to the issues at stake, and, however capable we may be of making up at the last moment for our singular and incorrigible unreadiness, it is certainly high time now that the Power which arms Gibraltar should have formulated a very definite policy with regard to future action in, for and about the land of the Moors.

A FRENCH PREFACE AND MOROCCO[1]

HADJ ABD EL KAREEM hitched up his flowing draperies and walked down the jetty with me, when I was leaving Tangier the other day for "London Country." We had been discussing the situation in which the young Sultan of Morocco finds himself to-day, and Abd el Kareem thoughtfully combed his white beard with three delicate yellow fingers as he walked. We parted at the head of the steps, where my boat waited. The fingers of our right hands met, and then, as the gracious habit of his people is, the Hadj raised his hand to his lips.

"And what is your last word about the outlook for Morocco, Hadj?" I asked. The long beard moved to a heavy sigh, the cashmere-covered shoulders of the old gentleman rose in melancholy deprecation, and:—

"Ihyeh'llah!" quoth he. "The page of Allah's book on which is written 'End' against the Empire of our Lord at Fez draws very near to reading. All that slaves (men) may do to hasten on that reading slaves are doing!"

"Such as, particularly?" The Jew boatmen below were patient, though their gunwale scraped and bumped the jetty stairs with every wave.

"Ihyeh—the aggression of the Fransawis (French) and the indiscretion of the Ingleezi (English), and—Ihyeh, Friend, thou knowest well what ails mine own

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, June 1903.

people. I say nothing of the mummeries at Court; but I say that a good bundle of faggots, well bound, will float a laden ass across a river, whilst, cut the faggots apart, let them float separately, and they will not bear a chicken to safety. We are not bound one to another in this my El Moghreb; there be many Nazarenes whose business and pleasure it is to widen our divisions, and—upon what is the Empire to float? Ihyeh—B'ísm Illah! It is true that only that which is written can be. Good be with ye!"

And so I left him still thoughtfully combing his beard. And in Gibraltar that evening I began my perusal of the Marquis de Segonzac's remarkable new book, *Voyages au Maroc*, with its startling preface by M. Etienne, deputy for Oran, leader of the Colonial party, and Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. "The aggression of the Fransawis, and the indiscretion of the Ingleezi," I quoted, as I turned the first page of this outspoken piece of Chauvinism.

Broadly speaking, the British public care little and know less about Moorish affairs; and in this we differ greatly from our neighbours across the Channel. Yet the most powerful European Minister who ever held sway in Morocco represented the Court of St James there; yet the most strategically valuable port in Morocco was once held and occupied by Britain; yet England's greatest naval leader held that Tangier was of even greater importance to the Power that looked to rule the seas than Gibraltar; yet the strength and importance of Britain's position at the gate of the Mediterranean, the highway to the East, depends very largely upon the neutrality of the strip of littoral facing Gibraltar from Melilla to Cape Spartel. It is scarcely fanciful to suppose that the day

will come when the fertile north-western shoulder of Africa, lying as it does, practically within heavy gun range of southern Spain and Gibraltar, commanding as it does the all-important maritime gate to the East, will prove of greater value to some European Power than could the whole of Southern Africa, with its blood-stained miles of veldt and its fortune-bearing centres of mining industry. But at present the public that is stirred by the words Empire and Imperialism is scarcely more to be touched by mention of Morocco than by reference to remote centres of China; though, according to more than one student of world politics, we shall presently have urgent reason to concern ourselves as much with one as with the other. The Extreme West (in the Mohammedan sense) and the Far East have many points in common, besides the fact that both are as inimical to Christendom as water is to fire.

But even in England, to-day, the most casual reader of newspapers has heard that France is periodically accused, by travellers, by students of foreign polities, and by Moorish kaids in far south-eastern settlements, of aggression in Morocco. There have even been solemn questions in the House of Commons, followed by equally solemn and soothing replies. And, if one excepts the handful of Europeans who really know Morocco, it may be said that the civilised world has, without afterthought, accepted as final France's reiterated assurances that her only desire is to maintain that mysterious myth, the *status quo* in Morocco, and to keep peace and order *within* her Algerian frontier, where it marches with the borders of the realm of the Lofty Portal, Moulai Abd el Aziz IV. of El Moghreb. True, we were informed in 1901 that

France had, with never a by your leave, extended her Algerian frontier across a belt of Moorish territory, two hundred kilometres wide; but observant English readers thought of the north-west frontier of British India and were silent, whilst the unobservant majority, to whom Figuig, Igli, and Ain Sefra were as one, and the caravan trade route from Timbuctoo a mere relic of the Haroun el Rascheed myth, accepted the news with their breakfast rolls, and passed on to the perusal of the stock and share list and the latest betting. The Quai d'Orsay, as it might have been Albion at her most perfidious, spoke deprecatingly of the necessity of defining her Algerian frontier more clearly, and sighed under the burden—the white man's burden—of maintaining peace among the turbulent tribes of the Tuat. "We desire only to assist his Shareefian Majesty in the maintenance of the *status quo* in Morocco. That is the Moorish interest which France, in common with all other civilised Powers concerned, must continue to serve, with patience and loyalty. England, the perfidious, may well have other schemes afoot—see else the favour shown her people at the Moorish Court—France at least is disinterested and single-minded as a child here."

I recalled these things as I opened the Marquis de Segonzac's book, and remembered being jeered at for an alarmist for having ventured to assert and re-assert in the past that France desired much beyond the maintenance of the *status quo* in Morocco. I found that the Marquis kept tolerably clear of politics in his very interesting, if unsatisfying, book. I gathered that he had gleaned a great deal of highly useful information on his travels—for the French Foreign Office. At least, I imagine that he gleaned for the

French Foreign Office, and that for these reasons: I know that he did travel over unfrequented ways; I am practically certain that he obtained much first-hand information of a rare sort: I satisfied myself by perusal of his book that he had not dispensed his gleanings to the reading public. Rather had he given out to the public just such husks and chaff, such winnowings of a rich crop as may be gathered by the casual observer in Christian-influenced Tangier. But, as has been indicated, the preface to this book (this book which will interest students of Morocco rather by reason of the reserve of knowledge it suggests than of the information it imparts) was written by the Deputy for Oran, a French politician whose influence in Algeria and whose very prominent position in the Chamber of Deputies gives weight to his words. The reserve of the book is remarkable—severely diplomatic. The outspoken frankness of its authoritative preface is a good key with which to open doors left closed by the Marquis de Segonzac. One has thought of the Marquis de Segonzac as a young gentleman more remarkable for adventurous daring than for discretion or diplomacy; but in this book he appears a veritable Machiavelli beside the writer of his preface, who heads the Colonial party in Paris. Says M. Etienne of the author of these *Voyages au Maroc*:—

"The author makes it a rule not to draw political conclusions. But he has chosen Morocco for the scene of his explorations, feeling that the knowledge of that country is of the first importance to France; and it is this which gives his work its particular interest. *Upon the solution of the Morocco question*

depends the future of France." (The italics are mine.) "There is no question here of one of those rich and more or less desirable countries which it is possible to divide. The enormous sacrifices which France has made in Algeria and Tunis will be made worthless if this solution is not in conformity with French interests and rights. France holds these rights from Bugeaud, and Lamoricière, from her army of Africa, and from her Algerian colonists. What other European Power can show similar rights?"

To judge from all her official assurances to the rest of Europe, France would have us believe that the vague rights referred to here are the privileges of helping the Sultan to maintain the *status quo* in Morocco, and keeping the peace on the Moorish-Algerian frontier! But even the careless English newspaper reader could hardly be asked to accept such suggestions in the light of a passage like the following:—

"Apart from the question of the Straits of Gibraltar, which alone is truly international, *France cannot divide Morocco with anyone.*" (English readers are requested to give these italicised words their thoughtful consideration, bearing in mind the nature of the authority behind them.) "From the political point of view the present position of France in Morocco is equivalent to the efforts of seventy years nullified. From the economical point of view Algeria is impoverished by the development on its flank of a country whose climate and products are similar, whilst it is very much more fertile. Finally, from the Mussulman point of view, Islam in Northern

Africa, escaping from our sphere of influence, French possessions may catch fire all at once, as the Algerian forests are kindled by the siroccos of summer, by reason of a European Power endeavouring to recommence the crusade of Christianity against the Mussulmans, and thus putting its foot upon an ant-heap. Such is the future which awaits us if we admit the establishment beside us of any European neighbour."

Is not that fine, and frank, and French? And how well M. Etienne manages his warning dig at Britain the perfidious in connection with crusades and ant-heaps! That is his comment upon Britain's policy at the Moorish Court since the death of Regent Wazeer Ba Hamed: a policy which for the first time in several years has suggested, not a definite purpose, but a degree of wakefulness which is better than absolute indifference. "If we admit the establishment beside us"—France's own establishment there is here taken as a matter of course. Thus airily does M. Etienne repudiate and brush aside all France's official assurances regarding her policy in Morocco during the past decade.

And now let us consider the grounds upon which the Deputy for Oran bases his claims for France in Morocco. It will be found that if the claims are judged daring, the only word left to apply to the grounds upon which they are based will be "insolent!"

"It is not only that Morocco does not present in any way for the other Powers the same interest as for us, but one may say without paradox that their interest, well understood, is to oppose nothing to our

preponderance. Several foreign writers who are above suspicion have expressed this sentiment plainly again and again, and if their language has somewhat changed of late we have only our weakness and timidity to blame. What in effect do the Powers want? Peace and the security which will permit them to develop their commerce, and in a probably not distant future to devote themselves to agriculture. France only, with her experience of the Mussulman and the Berber, can succeed in such an enterprise."

There is something almost magnificent about M. Etienne. "France only with her experience of the Mussulman." That is something like vanity! It displays a patriotism peculiarly French. A patriot of our own presented his blind eye to the telescope levelled at certain signals. The Deputy for Oran shuts his eyes to the history of the past century, and utterly ignores India and Egypt, and the greater part of the Mohammedan world as known to Europe, in the heat of his own dream of the establishment of a French Empire in North Africa. His reference to the Powers and agriculture must be regarded, one apprehends, as a mere rhetorical flourish. Then, perhaps, with a thought of France's professed care of the Moorish *status quo* only, M. Etienne adds:—

"Any partition must end, in this rugged and difficult country, where the fomenters of disorder will ever be sure of immunity by passing from one territory to another, in hopeless anarchy!" French annexation, we must assume, would merely cement, in peace and harmony, the mysterious *status quo*. British criticism is forestalled, and the peasant

conscience of France is quieted in anticipation by the following naïve passage :—

"'Every position on the road to India,' said Lord Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna, 'ought to belong to us and will belong to us.' In virtue of this axiom England took the Cape and Mauritius in 1815, Aden in 1839, Perim in 1857, Cyprus in 1878, and Egypt in 1882; an admirable example of political intelligence and perseverance in the conduct of affairs. Let us adopt it as a principle that no influence rivalling ours ought to make any attempt against our preponderance in the whole of Barbary, and let us prepare, by every means in our power, to realise this claim, without haste or interruption, with some continuity of design, and some energy in the execution, though we be for this purpose obliged to recur to the last argument of peoples and kings: *Ultima ratio regum.*"

Thus M. Etienne, in martial vein, quotes the motto which once ornamented the muzzles of French cannon, whilst the Quai d'Orsay asks Europe to believe that the only mission of France in Morocco is the peace-making elder brother's desire to preserve order and bolster up Moorish independence. But even M. Etienne, frankly as he shows us his country's real aims in North Africa, would not have us deem him ruthless:—

"Shall it be said of us Colonials that we dream only of victories and conquests? Such a thing is far from our thoughts; if our policy is wise, moderate, and well carried out, we believe there will be no such necessity. On the contrary, we ought to present our-

selves to the Sultan and to Morocco as a Mussulman Power, the only one capable of protecting him against the covetousness of Europeans."

Was ever Vice-President so candid?

"It is for us to guide the Sultan in the way of progress, and certainly we shall do it with more prudence and discernment than our rivals have sometimes shown. It is perhaps for Morocco above all that it is to be wished that France should be her instructor."

It will not be an easy task to bring Moors to M. Etienne's way of thinking. Algeria is too close to them; they know too much of the lives of their cousins over the border.

We come now to the consideration of ways and means from M. Etienne's point of view. And here the present writer would say that, absurd as the French pretence of disinterestedness in Morocco may have been (it has sufficed apparently to hoodwink Europe, and certainly it has effectually deceived the British public, if not a large proportion of British statesmen), there is nothing half-hearted or inefficient in the methods adopted by France to build up and extend her sphere of influence in Morocco. Watchful, tireless and consistent, patient in small matters, instant in punishment and peremptory in all questions of real import, France has steered her course toward Moorish dominance with masterly precision for a quarter of a century, picking up threads carelessly dropped by England, disregarding no least indication, missing no smallest advantage, and securing beyond

possibility of loss every point scored in the diplomatic game. The teaching and spread of the French language, the bestowal of French official patronage, and the granting of protection (scornfully refused by England) to the Shareefs of Wazzan, are but instances. The uses of the Algerian army upon the Moorish frontier, and the gradual extension of the Algerian railway upon Moorish soil, are doubtless very well known-to M. Etienne:—

"Undoubtedly there is here a delicate task, and one which demands not to be lost sight of for a single day. This is not the place to indicate the means of action at our disposal; they are many, of the first order, and some among them are of such a nature that no other European Power has their like. Let it suffice to allude to the services which we can expect from our Algerian Mussulmans as commercial and political agents. Islam knows no frontiers, and that is why those one might wish to create in Morocco will ever be useless. Algerian Mussulmans are regarded in Morocco not only as compatriots but as brothers. 'Ya Khouia,' 'Mon frère,' is the greeting with which all Moors welcome them." (The same remark would apply with equal pertinence to the Mohammedans of southern China.) "And then, what an admirable instrument, in a skilful hand, are these Shareefs of Wazzan, who have placed themselves under the protection of France!" (The late Shareef of Wazzan, when he married an English lady, applied to the British Minister for English protection, which, incredible as it may seem from the diplomatic standpoint, was rudely refused him. France naturally welcomed the affronted and influential Saint with

open arms.) "We have compromised them, but scarcely used them. The Shareef of Wazzan is the first personage in Morocco, after, or perhaps even before the Sultan, who in some sort receives investiture from him, and who appeals to his religious prestige whenever he finds himself in a difficult situation! It may be said then without exaggeration that the protection of these holy persons, if we know how to use it, can be equivalent to us to a protectorate of Morocco. They allow us to act over the Blad-es-Siba, over all the independent Berber States, that is to say over two-thirds of Morocco." (This would be news to the hardy Berbers of Morocco, who, as France will find to her cost, should she ever put into action her policy of annexation, own allegiance to no man.)

Finally, M. Etienne says :—

"Scientific curiosity was not the sole motive of the traveller. Under the desired prudence of the explorer one feels the ardour of the soldier, who 'in his nomad dreams sees everywhere the shadow of his flag spread itself upon his path.' The Marquis de Segonzac has placed at the service of science and of his country his boldness as an officer of Spahis, his heroism and endurance. He has written his name beside those of those valiant ones of whom a people is justly proud—the De Foucaulds, the Foureaus and the De Brazzas."

The present writer has quoted this document a some length, not merely because of its inherent interest, but in the earnest hope that it may serve as a

light by which the too easy-going British public may read more clearly their news of the march of events—the downward march of events—in Morocco. It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance to England of the future disposition of the Extreme West of the world of Islam. "The next European war will be waged over Morocco," said the far-seeing Disraeli. There could be no more serious menace to Britain's supremacy afloat and as a world power, than the establishment of a French Morocco, linked to Algeria and Tunis, and forming a North African Empire. Further than which there can be no doubt that (while the inevitability of the ultimate downfall of the Shareefian Government and the disintegration of the Moorish Empire may be admitted) the recent upheaval in Morocco, and the success achieved by the Pretender to Abd el Aziz's throne, is a state of things for which the English are partly responsible. Oddly enough, in view of the dishonesty and corruptness of their administration, the Moors are not either a disloyal or an insurrectionary people. On the contrary, they are loyal (piety and loyalty are interchangeable terms in Mohammedan communities), long-suffering, and, upon the whole, law-abiding. The Pretender's recent successes are chiefly due to the charges he was able to bring against the young Sultan and his government. "Your sovereign is a renegade, his measures are inspired by infidels, his pleasures are those of the Christians, his desire is to swamp us with infidel innovations." For those charges—the Pretender's battle-cry—the English are responsible. The British policy, and the indiscretions of various private citizens of Britain, gave the Father of the She-Ass his chance; and, optimistic correspondents to the contrary not-

withstanding, we have not yet heard the last of the Pretender or of the young Sultan's troubles. In my last letters from Tangier, from a correspondent in daily touch with the capitals and the Court, I read :—

"The situation has been growing more and more complicated and serious since you left, though, perhaps, less immediately critical. The actual condition of the country remains much the same. As you know, that is sufficiently chaotic. But the psychic conditions, the mood of the people, are more serious. Now, at long last, the foreign Ministers begin to shake their heads ominously and to show symptoms of anxiety. Only the French appear cheerful, though to be sure their affairs, particularly in Algeria, are tangled enough. It is certain that, with all their brilliant qualities, the French are no colonists. Abd er-Rahman, Abd es-Saddik has been endeavouring to bring the Fahsia (people of Fez) to their senses; but these and the Anjerra people are said to have taken fresh offence at Abd er-Rahman's going to receive King Edward. Indeed this feeling against England is being constantly, secretly and effectively fanned by the one European Power, with a well-defined business-like policy here, and, aided at every turn by the tools of that Power, the stupid natives are playing into the hands of the Fate that is spelled Foreign Intervention."

There is no room for reasonable doubt that the page of "The book of Allah," on which is written the final break-up of the Moorish Empire, has been almost reached. After the perusal of a document like M. Etienne's preface to the Marquis de Segonzac's book

on Morocco (the preface is signed ceremoniously: "Eug. Etienne. Député d'Oran, Vice-Président de la Chambre des Députés," and the book obviously enjoys official countenance and approval), there should be no room for doubt as to the real nature of France's aims and desires with regard to the ultimate disposition of this rapidly-crumbling realm. It is for Britain to say whether France should be given the free hand she appears to accept as a matter of course, whether it is indeed true that, "France only, with her experience of the Mussulman and the Berber, can succeed in such an enterprise." If the policy of drifting be pursued much further, the time for Britain (really the Power most shrewdly concerned) to speak will have gone by for ever. But if the worst is to be, and Europe is to permit the establishment of a French Morocco, remains still—for the present—the question of some *quid pro quo*, say in Egypt, and in Newfoundland. A crumb is better than no bread, and, once the loaf is seized, it may not be possible to obtain even such a crumb as, by comparison with the sacrifice of all claims in Morocco, the withdrawal of harassing French pretensions in Egypt would be. Events have before now proved the ability of the average Englishman to interest himself deeply, upon imperial grounds, in the fate of remote Antipodean wilds. Surely, with the records before him of the Soudan, of our Eastern Empire, of Gibraltar, and of the essential import to us of the freedom of the sea, the average Englishman can interest himself in the imminent fate of the land behind the African Pillar of Hercules.

Postscript

The following delayed letter, dated May 1st, has now reached me from Tangier, written by a gentleman who knows as much of the true inwardness of Moorish affairs as any European living, and who, at the time of writing this letter, was journeying on the road from the Court to the coast:—

"From the evidence I have been gathering during the past few weeks I am practically certain that the present rebellion has been carefully fanned and encouraged by an anti-English combination on the part of two lesser Powers with the one Power whose policy in Morocco has long been clear to all who know the country. I know now that the Pretender was in Tangier early last September, and I am assured that he was in touch with European officials at that time. He is said to be advocating the claims of Moulai Mohammed El Semiali, a descendant of the Idreesine dynasty, the founders of Fez, and of the Mosque of Moulai Idrees in that city. This movement is daily assuming more importance, and counts many adherents, even in Tangier and in other ports. Personally I begin to fear that the unfortunate young Sultan must be doomed; but the English in Tangier admit no doubts as to his final triumph; which would be well enough if the English were really prepared to back him in the tight corner they have helped him to reach. But the bulk of the Shareefs of the country—a power here, as you know—are working tooth and nail for his opponent; and now that I find that at least one of the European Powers

supports the Pretender, whilst all the friends, soldiers, officials, etc., of Abd el Aziz lie on their oars, I really cannot see upon what grounds one can base any reasonable hopes of the Sultan's triumph. It is true he is still paying his troops, but only with borrowed money, and I doubt whether his foreign creditors will continue their advances for long, particularly when one considers the extreme difficulty of sending remittances inland from the coast, when the caravans may be attacked at any moment *en route* by the Jeballa. I wish I could give you more hopeful advices, and, as you say, look for the brightest. But there would be no sense in my deceiving you. I simply state the facts as I see them. As for conclusions to be drawn from them, it seems to me obvious that—well, that France has made up her mind that the time has arrived for her to shake the tree, that Morocco, the ripe and much-desired plum, may fall at last into her ready hand."

THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN MOROCCO

TANGIER, *November* 1903.

THE year that is now ending has been a remarkable and, at times, a very exciting one in this strange, barbarous realm of his Shareefian Majesty Abd el Aziz IV. It may well be doubted if at any time during the past half century a more weighty and onerous responsibility has rested upon the shoulders of those who represent the Governments of Europe in Morocco than they have laboured under since last Christmas. At the moment one finds them enjoying something of a breathing space, owing to the young Sultan's disbandment of his irregular levies, and retirement in Fez. A glimpse of the situation which, by comparison, gives the European Legations here pause for rest, would go far toward making clear to English readers the sort of strain to which they have been subjected during recent months.

The town of Tetuan is situated some forty odd miles, a long day's ride in this country, from Tangier. The writer was speaking to a gentleman in Tangier the other day who has been trying for the last five months to obtain a few loads of a certain kind of tile which have been on order for him in Tetuan since last June. The tiles are waiting there, and the purchaser is waiting here, and offering any sort of rates for transport. But between them lie forty

odd miles of road which no man may hope to pass unless at the head of an army. And this is breathing time for the Legations.

Again, some months ago, the lieutenant of the Khaleefa of Tangier was seized beside his chief, within a couple of hours' ride of Tangier, by a band of tribesmen. The Khaleefa himself was bidden ride back to Tangier and praise Allah for a whole skin. The assistant was maltreated in an indescribably disgusting manner: his eyes were put out with his own spurs made red-hot, he was clubbed, branded with hot irons, and left naked to die on an exposed hill-side. By a chance which puzzles European doctors this unfortunate creature survives yet, a deplorable and tortured wreck. His assailants stride into Tangier Sôk, their guns on their arms, whenever the fancy takes them, and no man dares to say them nay, for now—during the moment of comparative rest for their excellencies the European Bashadors—there is no sort of Government in Morocco, save the primitive sort we call tribal, no taxes have been paid for the better part of two years, and the only law that runs among Moors is the easily demonstrable one which decrees that might is right and that the man who shoots first wins.

To be sure it might be said that the European Ministers are not here to administrate native affairs, and that this state of absolute anarchy among Moors is no immediate concern of theirs. One must be here among the Moors to realise fully and intimately the fallacy of this. Take, for example, the case of Señor Cologan, the Spanish Ambassador, who, by the way, as doyen of the Diplomatic Corps in Pekin, was the Minister chosen to take over the payment of

the last Chinese indemnity. As Spanish Minister here, Señor Cologan is responsible for the safety and well-being of four-fifths of the European community in Morocco, a section which may be said to include the whole of the "poor whites," a populace the governing of which would be no easy task even in the midst of all the resources of European civilisation, since it embraces a substantial portion of the criminal riff-raff of Southern Spain, escapees from the convict settlement at Ceuta, and undesirables of all sorts for whom the slums of Cadiz and of Andalusia generally have become temporarily too hot. There is plenty of aguardiente in Morocco, and the vilest of Hamburg gin is available to the poorest. Spanish blood runs at least as hotly here as in Spain, and, putting aside the ever-ready knife, of which the Spaniard of all grades is a past master, there are no restrictions here in the matter of carrying arms. Picture to yourself, then, the narrow streets and arched *culs-de-sac* of Tangier by night, the Spanish idlers clustered about little drinking dens, wild Moorish tribesmen with guns at the ready, and in their fanatical hearts the consciousness that at this time no law holds, or is pretended to hold, outside the walls of the foreign Legations. Here you have hereditary enemies of the most unmanageable sort rubbing shoulders every moment; upon the one hand, too often, the habit of crime and a mind inflamed by vile spirit; upon the other, a semi-savage fanatic to whom the slaying of an infidel is a virtue, proud yet decadent, and withal hotly aware that for a year and more all authority has been mocked in his country and no kaid has dared demand the payment of a single tax. A sudden oath, the flash of a knife, the

crack of a Mauser in Moorish hands, one fanatic shout of, "Death to the Nazarenes, who have made an infidel of our Sultan, and are robbing us of our country!" and what then of security? What then of the stored banks and Jewish houses of business? What then of the white women and children behind flimsy walls in pent and crowded Tangier, or in its straggling suburbs, and among the isolation of its villas on "The Mountain"?

Señor Cologan, even more, perhaps, than his colleagues of the other Legations, has had much to occupy his mind this year.

In the French Legation, M. Saint Rene-de Taillandier, a man of scholarly and academic family, has a delicate and difficult position to hold. French pretensions in Morocco are very high; they are based upon the aims and longings, not to speak of deliberate actions and intentions, of the most ambitious statesmen produced by France during half a century. They are fanned and fostered by the military authorities across the Algerian frontier—that vague but ever-advancing line which has now reached Figuig in the south-east. The military party have their inspired organs in the press; the younger officers in Algeria have long been frenetic, athirst for glory and advancement. And in Paris there is the Bloc, the all-powerful Bloc, whose tail is socialistic and strongly anti-military, and whose mouth-piece in Morocco is M. Saint Rene-de Taillandier. Truly a very difficult and delicate position, in which M. de Taillandier must be grateful for the fact that, in the *personnel* of his Legation, he has a circle of exceptionally able and loyal colleagues. The French Minister has been unjustly accused of being pro-

English. The accusation is a tribute to his high sense of honour and of justice.

M. de Bacheracht, the Russian Minister in Morocco, is here to serve French interests, a substantial addition to the strength of French influence. M. de Bacheracht has fulfilled this task in so courteous and considerate a spirit that even those whose policy is necessarily opposed to that of France (and, consequently, to that of Russia) have been led to entertain a warm and sincere regard for the personality of the Russian Minister.

In the German Legation, Baron F. de Mentzingen is more fortunately placed than M. Saint Rene-de Taillandier, for Germany has no traditional pretensions in Morocco. The development of her commerce here is Germany's simple and well-served aim, and in his work in Morocco Baron Mentzingen is assisted by a staff of honourable German gentlemen of a stamp not connected with intrigue of any sort. The Italian embassy in Morocco is ably served, and contains much special knowledge of Moorish customs and affairs. But the present policy of Italy in this country is one of absolute passivity, and therefore is not a difficult one to handle. One may take it that French ambitions here, high as they are, will not be checked by Italy. M. G. de Gaspardy and Le Comte Conrad de Buisseret, the present Ambassadors here from Austria and Belgium respectively, whilst doubtless sharing to some extent in the anxiety which has ruled in all the Legations, have had fewer difficulties to face than have most of their colleagues.

Readers of newspapers in England, with or without knowledge of the inwardness of Moorish affairs, should be aware, one thinks, that Sir Arthur Nicolson,

the British Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary in Morocco, has this year had to deal with issues of exceeding delicacy and complexity. The responsibility upon his shoulders has been heavy and continuous, and he has borne it with conspicuous success in circumstances of exceptional difficulty. It may be pointed out that the strategic position of Gibraltar in relation to Tangier, as being the nearest point from which the aid of European troops might be obtained in case of emergency, has in a sense made Sir Arthur Nicolson responsible for the safety of the whole European community in Morocco. The consistent tact and discretion which in the past have served to render Sir Arthur the most popular and generally-respected Minister who has represented Britain in Morocco for many years, have not failed him at any moment during these most harassing months of his residence here. There have been junctures, more than a few, this year, at which a momentary loss of discretion, a momentary weakness or yielding to not unnatural panic (many and varied were the kinds of pressure brought to bear upon our Minister while troops in Gibraltar awaited orders to embark at any moment for Morocco) would have precipitated, if not actual disaster, at least a crisis which would have produced consternation in half the chancelleries of Europe. The very regrettable affair of Mr Walter B. Harris's captivity, the issues involved by which were very much more than merely individual, was but one among several difficult complications which our Minister handled with the greatest skill, moderation and success. (In this connection, by the way, it may be mentioned that Sir Arthur has handed to the young Shareef of Wazan,

Moulai Ahmet, a handsomely-inscribed gold watch from the British Government, as a mark of appreciation of the Shareef's good offices as mediator between the authorities and the tribesmen in Mr Harris's affair.)

An Ambassador cannot go beyond the policy and decisions of his Government, but it may fairly be said that, according to their merits, the Governments of Europe have been served in Morocco during a season of great stress and difficulty with conspicuous ability, loyalty and discretion. Further, if the European Powers, and particularly the French and English Governments, could but agree upon a policy that should be at once definite, mutual, generous and firm in relation to Morocco, it may be regarded as certain, first, that their present representatives here would pursue and apply that policy successfully, and, second, that a now rapidly-crumbling State might be saved in its own despite, so to say, and administered upon lines which should make for stability and permanence. Failing some such assistance, the end of the existing *régime* must be admitted to be near. Unaided, the present young Sultan can never regain the hold his forebears had upon the reins of government.

KAID MEHEDDI EL MENNEBHI

EX-MINISTER OF WAR AND FAVOURITE WAZEER

THE SULTAN OF MOROCCO

TANGIER, *December* 1903.

THE personality of Moulai Abd el Aziz IV., by Allah's grace (and his late Grand Wazeer's strong head and hand) Sultan of Morocco, should possess a special interest for Englishmen, if only as a matter of *noblesse oblige*, for the young ruler might fairly trace many of his difficulties to his fondness for the British and to our deliberate influence upon him. Here in Tangier our obligation is felt clearly enough, and the Lofty Portal's warmest supporters are accordingly the English. By the same token, even in Tangier, one hears mighty little of loyalty or devotion to the young man among his own subjects. And that is not surprising. The very tendencies and qualities which give him standing in the regard of Europeans generally, and the British in particular, are the things which fill his Muslim subjects to the throat with angry scorn and contemptuous resentment. If it be true that a Christian may not faithfully serve God and Mammon, it is doubly sure that a Mohammedan ruler, in unimpeachably Mohammedan Al Moghreb, may not hope to serve successfully the Christian and his own world of Islam.

There is something more than a little pathetic about the figure of Abd el Aziz; that is one of many ways in which he resembles the feckless Louis XVI. of France. To feel this intimately one must perhaps

be in Morocco here, among his subjects, for (despite its nearness to Europe) there never was a land the atmosphere and conditions of which were more elusive and difficult to convey to dwellers in the homes of underground railways and County Councils, than this Land of the Setting Sun.

Rather more than five-and-twenty years ago a well-known man made a present of a beautiful Circassian slave, the Lalla R'kia, to Moulai el Hassan, the then Sultan of Morocco. The Lalla R'kia had other qualities than prettiness, and was soon more thoroughly in her Lord's confidence than any other lady of his hareem, including his legitimate wives. To the Lalla R'kia there was born Abd el Aziz, who now sits (in unenviable and insecure state) under the Shareefian Parasol, Sultan of this tottering realm. This in itself is something of a sore point with the orthodox, for there remains Moulai Mohammed the One-Eyed, born of the late Sultan's legitimate first wife, and by custom and tradition his rightful successor as ruler. Now the late Sultan was not pro-English; he was too thoroughly a Moor, and too strong and politic a Muslim ruler of Muslims for that. But it will be admitted by all who knew him that he always inclined a more friendly ear to the English than to any other Nazarenes. He was less suspicious of the British than of any other Christians. He did not fear and resent us, as he did the French, for example. Moulai el Hassan is now in Paradise, however, *im sha' Allah!* The point is that he educated his son, Abd el Aziz, the present ruler, in the same tradition, and taught him that the British were more to be relied upon, more to be admired, and more to be respected than any other infidels.

The late Sultan left behind him, as Regent and Grand Wazeer (Abd el Aziz was but sixteen years old when the strategy of the Wazeer established him securely as his father's successor), a man as strong and as essentially a Moor as himself, and until Ba Ahmad died, three years ago, the youthful Sultan not merely was given no scope in which to develop his English tendencies, but he was practically confined to the quarters of his mother, the Lalla R'kia, and prohibited from the display of any tendencies whatever. For more than the half of a decade Ba Ahmad ruled Morocco and its Sultan with a hand of iron and according to the best Moorish traditions. From the European standpoint it was a barbarous rule. It certainly shut out all possibility of innovations in the way of Western civilisation from Christendom. Two things it did: It secured inviolable safety to foreigners and their property in Morocco, and it drew in the revenues of the country, largely into Ba Ahmad's purse rather than into the Shareefian coffers perhaps, but — it gathered them in, and paid the country's working expenses, and kept down rebellion, and even the talk of rebellion. And as to the matter of the Wazeer's purse—"Lord," said he to the royal youth, "I have no heirs. I am an old man who knows; you are a young prince who does not know. Leave me then my free hand. It is a strong hand. Men tell thee I have amassed great wealth. The better for thee, Lord. The Sultan is my only heir. Leave me then my free hand, for it is strong, and—*I know.*"

Then the iron-handed Wazeer died, and whilst the Court in Marrakish quivered and rustled with excitement, young Abd el Aziz proclaimed his inten-

tion of being his own Wazeer for the future, and the scramble began for the great fortune of Ba Ahmad, a portion of which did actually reach the Shareefian coffers. The young Sultan would be his own Wazeer, he said; there should be great changes in his realm; he would do as do other great monarchs; the modern world was full of wonderful and interesting things which pertained properly to royalty; all these advantages should be his; his shadowy, hareem days of tutelage were ended; the king had come into his kingdom and would achieve great things. Conceive the rustle of approval from the hareem, the unctuous flattery of the whole tribe of Court parasites, even the echo, there in Marrakish, of European acclamation of the young Sultan's enlightenment, his progressive, modern spirit. But Abd el Aziz was little more than a boy, and if man may not live alone, Moorish Sultan assuredly cannot live alone, but can only rule by the strong and deft manipulation of many intertwining and conflicting currents of influence.

One thing about Abd el Aziz, apart from his boyish good-nature, curiosity, and facile impressionability, was outstanding and noticeable; that was his deeply-implanted inclination toward, and preference for, the English. At his hand, then, the plastic young man found Corony, or Kaid (now Sir Harry) Maclean, the British military instructor of his troops. At the Kaid's hand was Meheddi el Mennebhi, the representative of a considerable kabyle in the neighbouring hills. Mennebhi, thus identified with British influence, was at once taken into high favour and sent off on his mission to the Court of St James with Sir Harry. But the French must not be offended, so Ben Sleeman, perhaps the most able of the Wazeers, was despatched

to Paris and St Petersburg. Remained with the Sultan (besides the commercial representatives of Christendom, then busily introducing to his youthful notice the most costly of European toys), El Fedool Gharnit, another leading Wazeer with an eye upon the favourite's place. His main hold lay in his warning:—"Lord, your new advisers have not yielded up to you the half of Ba Ahmad's great wealth." (It is a fact that some of Ba Ahmad's jewels were subsequently offered for sale to Christians in Tangier, and not by Shareefian authority.) The young Sultan took ready umbrage in his own facile way. Gharnit and his party, the orthodox Wazeers and tried men, were, after all, the best. Mennebhi should find a dungeon awaiting him on his return from England, and that should be the end of his brief career. And Mennebhi undoubtedly would have entered that dungeon but for the friendly intervention of the English, and his own pluck and ready resource. As it was, he was restored to favour as Minister of War; but—mark this, and recall the methods of French Louis XVI.—Gharnit, his accuser, and the whole ring of his bitter personal enemies, remained equally in power and favour, and shared their Lord's counsels with him. That was three years ago, and that is the situation to-day, and the least hopeful feature of the young Sultan's position and character. His counsels are ever divided. He gives his confidence to one Wazeer, and the next day acts upon the advice of another who is the bitter and implacable opponent of the first. Thus, upon one party's advice he set out the other day to occupy in person the stronghold of Tazza, and now has retreated to Fez upon the other party's advice. No concerted action

is possible from such a Cabinet, and it is impossible to look for a consistent policy from Abd el Aziz while he continues to fly from one to another of these cut-throat players at political advancement, sharing their counsels and acting upon them alternately.

But Abd el Aziz is not the only inconsistent power in the world. His amiability is touching. His ready acceptance of European (mainly British) counsels in the matter of reforming his country's administration, by robbing him of all spiritual prestige among his orthodox subjects, has placed him in the perilous and unenviable position of a monarch who hardly dares to stir outside his palace walls, beyond which his rule runs not one yard; it has emptied his coffers under the long strain of unsuccessfully combating the insurrection it caused, and stripped him of all power of replenishing them by making him incapable of collecting his own revenues. And, having done so much, Britain has suddenly turned a cold shoulder upon the young man and tacitly warned him to look for no sort of support or countenance from her.

Abd el Aziz has all those traits of character which we are used to expect in a fairly intelligent young half-caste, and he is rich in the defects of the type. Stability he has none. His mind is alert, imitative, impressionable and flighty; his character amiable, yielding, kindly, and weak as water. Reduced to despair at one moment by the parlous condition of his finances, he is unable to resist the temptation of ordering the next moment a thousand pounds' worth of some toys that have caught his eye. Easily reconciled to a minister who has robbed and helped to cripple him, he will fly into a rage and personally chastise the favourite who should so far forget himself

as to excel his royal master in some form of sport. It may be doubted if any Moorish Sultan ever wished his subjects more happiness, or was more cordially well-disposed toward all men; and it may be doubted if any Moorish Sultan ever dragged the affairs of his realm into more hopeless confusion. Abd el Aziz has the alert curiosity of a schoolboy, the facile, hysterical impressionability of a clever schoolgirl, the good-nature of an English country gentleman, and just precisely no strength at all. And if anything in the world of politics is certain, it is that, failing British aid, Moulai Abd el Aziz is foredoomed to complete and final failure.

THE MOORISH PRETENDER

TANGIER, *December* 1903.

THE Moorish Rogui, or Pretender, at whose instigation the tribesmen of Morocco have been in open rebellion against their Sovereign Lord the Sultan for close upon two years, during which period no taxes whatever have been paid in any part of the Empire, has now proved himself, paradoxically enough, to be a man of no particular importance. He is the creature of circumstances and of his times, in a sense which makes his individual existence as Rogui merely accidental. So much is clear; the Pretender is no Napoleon, no conquering genius, nor yet a heaven-born saviour and leader of the people. Were he the half of any one of these things he had assuredly been proclaimed Sultan of Morocco many months ago. The circumstances in his favour have been very many; those against him, outside the primary difficulty, which genius would have overcome, of the lack of cohesion and inability to organise which characterise the Moorish people, have been very few. Those writers who, a year ago, asserted that the Rogui would never again be heard of, were doubtless aware of these things, and judged accordingly. But all of them, including the well-informed *Times* correspondent, who was then offending the Faithful

by residing at Court upon intimate terms with the Sultan, apparently overlooked the facts, then indicated in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*, that the Rogui was paying his way in solid French gold, and that his appearance was hailed with unconcealed delight by the military party in France, and by army men and their supporters in Algeria, as a notable step toward their much-desired goal of French intervention in Morocco. In plain words, the Pretender has, from his outsetting, been backed by the military party in Algeria, at whose disposal, one assumes, is a share of French secret service funds.

Another source of the Rogui's power lies in a curious misapprehension which has now become an article of faith among tens of thousands of otherwise intelligent, orthodox Moors. This is the belief that the man is none other than Moulai Mohammed the One-eyed, who, according to popular Moorish tradition and custom, should now be on the throne, since he is Abd el Aziz's elder brother, and was born in wedlock of the late Sultan's first wife, whilst the mother of the Sultan, his junior, was merely a favourite slave. Like certain more enlightened folk in Christendom, the Moors possess a singular faculty of making themselves really and genuinely believe the thing they wish to believe, even in the face of ocular demonstration to the contrary. The writer knows Moors in Fez who solemnly proclaim their belief in this particular myth, though they have quite recently seen the real flesh and blood Mohammed in the Sultan's palace. Moreover, the belief is firmly held and ardently proclaimed by the Shareefs of Wazan and their great following (even by the half European sons of the English Shareefa) in despite of

their knowledge, or of what certainly was their knowledge a little while ago, that the Pretender is really an adventurer who, a few years back, was robbing them in Algeria by posing as one of themselves and collecting tribute in their sacred name. It should easily be understood that this widely-spread belief gives the Rogui a great pull.

There is a third source of influence drawn upon by the Pretender, which, though very real and vital to the Moors, will not appeal strongly to the Nazarene observer. The man is a master of legerdemain, in the arts of which he acquired considerable dexterity during his recent adventures as a mock Shareef in Algeria. His tricks would scarcely excite remark in the Egyptian Hall, perhaps, since Egyptian Hall audiences do not seek to find supernatural explanations of the performances they witness; but they have done very much for him among ignorant and fanatical hill tribesmen. This fact could be illustrated by a dozen stories of changing stones into French money and the like, but one must suffice in this place; it is the latest.

In the neighbourhood of Tazza the Shareefian troops did succeed in inflicting severe punishment upon the Pretender's forces in one skirmish. One of the Rogui's thick-and-thin supporters warned him afterwards that much disaffection existed in the camp, owing to the fact than men who had been promised immunity from bullet wounds and the like had actually been wounded, and even slain, by the Sultan's men. The Rogui pondered, took his informant into his confidence, dug a grave in his tent, and therein buried the informant, with a hollow bamboo so placed in the man's mouth as to com-

municate with the surface air. Then the Pretender summoned a deputation of the disaffected.

"My sons," says he, "I hear there are among ye foolish and doubting ones who repine because some of your comrades appear to have suffered at the hands of our enemies, the friends of the infidels and followers of the arch-renegade who calls himself your Sultan. This is foolish of you, but yet I would have you reassured. Therefore shall ye speak with one who, slain in my service, serves me still in another world, and that without repining. Let us speak with Abd er-Rahman, say, whom the infidel-lovers shot yesterday. Ho, Abd er-Rahman! Ho, there in Paradise! Speak to these, my faint-hearted disciples, I pray thee."

The juggler waved his arm, in stately fashion be sure, and from out the bowels of the earth apparently the simple tribesmen heard the voice of a departed associate rally them upon their lack of faith and courage. The voice described a sumptuous pavilion in Paradise, under which ran a crystal-clear river, about which luscious fruits, ever of perfect ripeness, awaited the hand that would pluck them, in which a thousand big-eyed houris of dazzling beauty tended him, the thrice-blessed Abd er-Rahman, who, having by good luck died while fighting for the Rogui, now enjoyed a felicity to attain which, could they but realise a tenth of it, every mother's son in the Pretender's horde would straightway rush to seek death while fighting the Shareefian troops.

The malcontents drew back in satisfied awe and happy reverence. From that moment they vowed they were the Pretender's, soul and body. "It is well, my sons," quoth the Rogui, stepping backward and placing one foot over the orifice through which

his unfortunate accomplice spoke and breathed. "But this is now a sacred spot. Go then, each of you, and bring hither a great stone, that we may erect a shrine, that all men may see and know this for the place in which I called one from the joys of Paradise to speak with ye." And they brought their stones and built the shrine; and so ended the Rogui's most famous trick, and the Rogui's most faithful accomplice.

But, when all is said, these things—the juggling, the Algerian gold, the Moulai Mohammed delusion—are but side-winds by which the fire of the Pretender's influence as a rebel leader are fanned. These are useful beyond doubt; but the mainspring of the man's power is the fact that he leads and voices rebellion against Moulai Abd el Aziz IV., whose spiritual prestige, the sole enduring basis of temporal authority in Morocco, the young man has utterly and entirely lost. The Rogui is not really Mohammed the One-Eyed. He is not at all of saintly blood. He is a common man of the people; shrewd, coarse of habit, utterly unprincipled, and very poorly educated. (The writer has before him at this moment one of the Pretender's crude letters to the tribesmen, a reproduction, with a free translation, of which will be found at the end of this chapter. The Arabic is of the baser sort, the phraseology is lame, and the spelling abominable; but even the learned among Moors applaud this letter by reason of the masterly cunning they hold it to display, and the manner in which, without a single direct statement—after the coarse and clumsy Christian fashion—it makes Koranic warnings and injunctions to incite the people against their Lord the Sultan, who, by some strange twist in his nature, has "himself become more than

half an infidel and lover of infidels.") His name is Jilali el Zarhouny, otherwise Ba Hamára, The Father of the She-Ass, an appellation which alludes to one of his many affectations in travel. He was a subordinate servant of the Court with Mennebhi, the favourite Wazeer, in Ba Ahmad's time, and a bitter personal enemy of the said Mennebhi. His travels as an impostor in Algeria have been mentioned. On his return to Morocco the chance of his life was given the Rogui by the popular resentment, now roused to blazing point, of the young Sultan's progressive and European tendencies, and his ostentatious fondness for men and things, methods and pastimes, from England, all so deadly offensive to orthodox Moors. (In Morocco, as in other Mohammedan lands, orthodoxy, piety, fanaticism and patriotism all mean the same thing.)

"Your Sultan is illegitimate, slave-born, an infidel, the friend of infidels, and the enemy of all true Muslims," said the Rogui; and he deftly quoted Al Koran to prove that the nethermost fires of hell awaited the Muslim who followed and submitted to such a leader. "Who is the Moor most favoured by your Sultan? A creature who plays infidel games with him, who takes part with him in sacrilegious practices, making pictures one of another, and in the forbidden garb of the infidel. See, here are the pictures. Who are the men who have your Sultan's ear and are about him at all times? Christians, infidels, and the outcasts among infidels, who sit with him, appear with him in public, and take his hand as equals. And, these new laws, you know whence they come? Like everything else your Sultan cares for, they come from the accursed infidel,

who will swallow up your land before your eyes and make it his own. Your Sultan is an infidel himself, and knows that this our Al Moghreb is no safe home for him. He has bought him a home in infidel England, and when he has sufficiently bled you he will betray you into the hands of the infidels and himself fly to their lands." (The report had some time before gained credence that the Sultan had sent for a number of catalogues of estates for sale in England, and that after consideration Kaid Sir Harry Maclean had purchased in his own name, but for the Sultan, a large property in one of the home counties. The explanation given was that the Kaid had really purchased this estate for his own use.)

It was a powerful indictment, from the Moorish point of view. But the thing of it was that no indictment was really needed. The Rogui taught the people nothing; he merely put their own thoughts and bitter feelings into words of fire and sedition. The angry resentment and disaffection were there already. The Father of the She-Ass voiced them cleverly, and the people applauded him, at first, simply as a preacher. Gradually, then, the man himself and his handful of most devoted associates spread abroad reports among the tribesmen; and here, as may be imagined, the good gold from Algeria played a very prominent part. He was a true Shareef, he changed stones into gold, bullets could not harm him, he was the fore-runner of the veritable Mahdi, he was Moulai Mohammed the One-Eyed and rightful claimant to the throne. Wild hill-men sucked in these marvellous tales over their charcoal fires, polished up their flint-lock muskets and sallied forth to see, and subsequently to join, the new power in the

land. No doubt the Rogui himself was more startled than anyone to hear that he was actually Moulai Mohammed; but he found the idea worth acting upon, and promptly he set up his mock court among the hills, appointing ministers and chamberlains, a fly-flicker, an executioner, wazeers and counsellors from among the half-naked barbarians who rallied about him. French gold made the thing real, fanatical Moorish hatred of the young Sultan's innovations did the rest, and thus—a fully-fledged Pretender to the Throne, who, be it said, would have swept Abd el Aziz from his place in a month had he possessed the requisite generalship, the genius necessary to maintain unity and concentration among his wild followers. But he lacked this, and so, after every successful skirmish, the bulk of his levies would disperse to their mountain homes to discuss the situation and divide the spoils, thus giving the Sultan time to retreat from point to point, to reorganise his army and to establish communications. And the Pretender, despite his assistance from Algeria, lacks initiative to rouse from their apathy and rally about him the great bulk of the sympathisers with his cause; *i.e.*, the great bulk of the people of Morocco.

TRANSLATION.

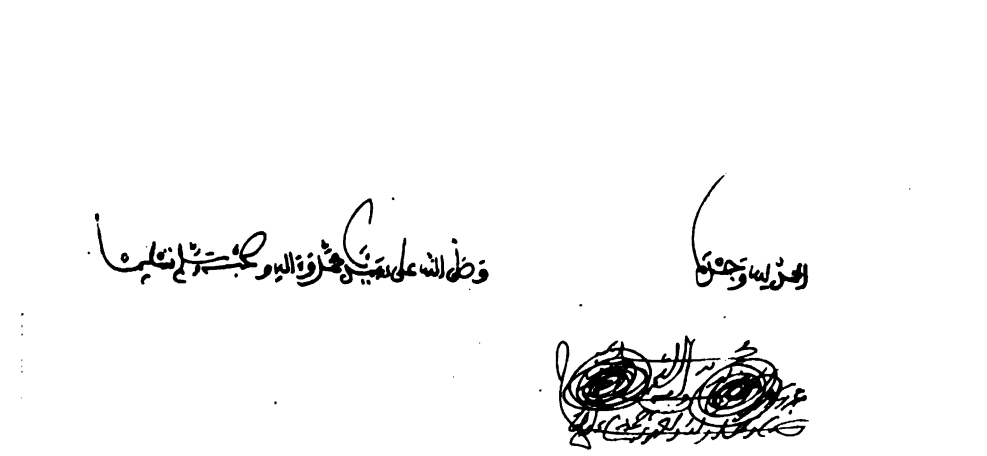
PRAISE BE TO GOD!

To the servants of the True Shareef, the Kabyles of the Beni Messara, Setta, Ben Mezalda, Ben Yehmed, Akhmas, Ben Hassan, Beni Huzmor, Beni Yeder, Beni Aroos, Serif, Rhouna, Beni Yessef, Beni Khorfot, Osdrass, Beni Msaouar, Jebel el Habib, Anjerra, Beni Said, Aghmara, and all the dwellers in the mountains of Hobt; may God keep ye in the right way. Peace be with ye, and the blessings of God and of the Prophet.

Ye are without doubt advised of the abasement in our land, even unto dragging in the dirt, of Islam; to such a point that the wise are drunken with unrest. They find no means to remedy the evil state, and are much perplexed. All this comes, as ye know, from the sinful innovations and hankerings after new things of chiefs who court the infidels, following their lead, departing from the good counsels of Believers. These miserable ones, who indeed become infidels, are lost, both for this life and for the life to come. Their portion is fire.

(This indirect way of accusing the Sultan and his favourites appeals far more to thoughtful Moors than any direct statement could.—A. J. D.)

It is on this subject that our Lord, the Prophet, says in his Book:—"See ye not those who have strayed from the way of God, refusing to receive his mercy, and have, by their evil deeds lowered the fame and might of Islam." He has said also:—"Put not



THE ROGUI'S LETTER

your trust in tyrants, for from that ye will be cast into the fire." These sinful people no longer take notice of the divine verse which says:—"God has bought from Believers their souls and their goods for Heaven." The sacred law condemns them, as the following verse proves:—"He who courts the friendship of infidels becomes of them." The Prophet hath said in his Revelations:—"He who changes religion and belief by heresy errs from the straight path." In such a case it is the clear duty of Believers to warn such an one or to destroy him, for the Prophet hath said:—"Kill him who changeth religion."

Meanwhile, all this hath been known to ye, and not one among ye hath taken up the defence of the cause of Islam. The Mussulman (here the writer aims more directly at the person of the Sultan), who is not bound to the vanities of this world, nothing can hinder from following strictly the way of God. What can ye hope from the hypocrite, from the infidel delivered over to pleasures and passions? Think yé that he will raise the fame of Islam, or that he will defend it?

Have ye forgotten the tradition which teaches us that the Prophet said:—"One part of my nation will not stray from the right way; it will await through suffering the mercy of God. This part of my nation will live in the Extreme West." That, as ye know, is our Al Moghreb. What happiness for that country!

Inspiring ourselves with this, we have arisen and taken up arms by the command and by the help of God, and of His Prophet, to re-establish the might of Islam, raise it from its abasement in this country and reunite it in its dispersement. He who will obey

these our commands from God and the Prophet shall have peace, and who obeyeth not shall be punished with death. The truth must be told; otherwise we are lost.

We give you to know that by the help of God our truly Shareefian troops have inflicted a great defeat upon the corrupt M'halla (army, or encampment) which Abd el Aziz sent out, and which was encamped at Hiayna. All the criminals who composed it took flight in the greatest disorder; we, with the Mussulmans who were with us, occupied the encampment and took possession of all therein: tent, cannon, horses, mules, arms, ammunition and valuables. All the Kabyles gave us what they could spare to aid us in sustaining the true cause and religion of Islam. Thus should all true Mussulmans do, and not as the miserable and infidel-loving tyrants.

We give you to know that you may take your share of joy and pleasure in the victory won by the Mussulman troops, and we bid you collect your fighting men and come to our gathering at Fez as soon as you have received our letter. Let no negligence or idleness hinder you from the defence of Islam, and have no pity for him who has abased Islam and is a tyrant.

2nd Ramadan 1320.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

TANGIER, *December* 1903.

WHILE the Imperialist wrathfully accuses the Little Englander of seeing nothing beyond the confines of his own parish, the Little Englander might reply, if he chose, that his accuser sees little within a thousand miles of home. The north-west corner of Africa, which Moors call Moghreb al-Acksa and we know as Morocco, is situated within a thousand miles of Hyde Park Corner, and within fifteen miles of Sir George White's residence in Gibraltar. It is the wall that skirts one side of our sea-way to the East. Its ports are watch-towers that must be passed by all vessels of Western civilisation bound through Suez to the British Empire over-sea. Not only is its northernmost promontory as important a part of the gate of the Mediterannean as is Gibraltar, but its fertile soil is the main source of the supplies which support the garrison of Gibraltar, a far richer and more kindly strip of littoral than southern Spain can show. No man with eyes in his head and an atlas at hand can fail to realise the vital political and strategic importance of the territory facing Gibraltar, alike to the first maritime power in the world, and to the power which holds already Algeria and Tunis. Yet, upon the English side of the Channel, less interest is shown in the fate of Morocco than in the affairs of Siam; almost less is known of the present complicated

situation in this country which lies at the back door of Europe, stubbornly nursing its virgin riches and hastening the end of its own independence, than is known of the affairs and interests of Central Africa and Equatorial America; and for this fact Britain and British interests will suffer in the near future, as they have suffered many times before, for the lack of the most rudimentary sort of forethought.

Upon the other side of the Channel, now, matters are very far otherwise. In Paris, Morocco and Moorish affairs are as familiar to the minds of men as the Riviera is to Londoners, and with a deal more reason. (If Londoners only knew it, they could find a far finer climate, more beautiful scenery, more interesting surroundings, and a better fillip to jaded health, in Morocco, almost within sight of their country's flag at Gibraltar, than any part of the Riviera can offer them.) North Africa means as much to the average thinking Frenchman as India means to the English. Both French and English have long recognised the importance of Egypt, overlooking as it does the Eastern entrance to the Mediterannean. But Morocco at the Western gate, the gate by which the forces of Western civilisation must approach the East—Morocco, the temperate land which is rich enough to be made the granary of Southern Europe, the land which could well endure the strain of sheltering armies and navies—Morocco we are apparently content to leave France to cultivate. It is too close at hand to be deemed worth the big Englander's consideration. This is a pity, for Morocco is of vastly more importance to British interests than are a great many remote lands with regard to which the Imperialistic Britisher prides

himself upon being well posted. And the situation in Morocco is urgent and critical. And our friends in Paris, unlike ourselves, are keenly and intimately cognisant of this.

Whilst still nominally under the dominion of a Sultan and Shareefian Government, Morocco is actually without a ruler, and certainly without a Government at this present moment. There are two opposing forces in the country, both held temporarily in abeyance by the winter rains (which make roadless Morocco almost impassable) and by a variety of more complicated causes. The one is constitutional and infinitely smaller than the other, judged by the number of its supporters. This is personified by the young Sultan, whose power is scarcely felt or acknowledged outside the walls of the palace that shelters him in Fez. The other is represented by the Pretender, who is now busily engaged in beating up new adherents for a spring campaign. And at the present moment, what is to be said of the situation as between Sultan and Pretender?

One may have two answers to that question. To find friendly supporters of the young Sultan one must go to the Europeans in Morocco, and particularly to the British, with their traditional respect for constitutional authority and inclination to back a hard-hit man. Their answer to this question would be that, having inflicted punishment upon the rebels in several engagements, and having unfortunately been beaten in certain other fights, the Sultan has now disbanded his irregular army for the rainy season, during which the state of the country adds enormously to the cost and difficulty of maintaining an army in the field, and has retired into winter quarters in Fez. But, the less well-

informed but equally kindly-meaning newspaper correspondent will add, before disbanding his army the Sultan managed to sit down with it in Tazza, and that was a very big thing for any Sultan of Morocco to have done. If we then seek the Moorish view of the situation (which, in the matter of the Tazza occupation, at all events is the only one based upon actual fact) we should be told this :

In his innumerable skirmishes with the Pretender's forces, the Sultan was more often beaten than not. His troops were, many of them, drilled men, and much better armed than the Pretender's; but the trouble was he could not make them fight. The regular Shareefian army fought, it is true. It is their business. But the regular army, after all, is a small thing. The levies, the men to whom the Sultan was at last paying five times the regular daily wage, could not be made to fight against the Pretender, because they wanted the Pretender to win. By strategy the Sultan managed to get a garrison of his regular army into Tazza, where they were promptly besieged and made powerless. The Sultan himself was never within gun-shot of its walls. He camped with the remains of his army near Tazza, and made desperate endeavours to rescue his men in Tazza. His levies would not fight for him, and he was driven back by the Pretender's men. Then he gave up in disgust, disbanded the troops he had barely money enough to pay, and retreated upon Fez, leaving the garrison in Tazza to worry its way out as best it might.

And now the Sultan's rule runs as far as his palace walls in Fez, and not another yard. His coffers are empty, no taxes have been paid, or are likely to be paid; Kaid Maclean was sent off hot-foot to England

to raise a loan, and already, because the news comes that he is not meeting with success there, his prestige at court is falling, and Mennebhi, his *protégé*, the Sultan's erstwhile favourite, has been deposed and is leaving Morocco for Mecca on pilgrimage.

"And," said one old Moorish scribe to whom the writer spoke of these things, "while the Sultan in Fez is at his wits' end for money, you see the tribe of his European parasites here in Tangier, his infidel *employés* of one sort and another, dismissed from Court out of respect for the angry will of the Faithful, kicking their heels in this infidel-afflicted town, and some of them—for whom, doubt it not, Allah hath warm places prepared in Al Hotoma—spending the Sultan's money, drawn on his order from the Customs, like water, flaunting it in our faces, buying our land and houses with it, and striving to think of new ways of dissipating it. There are two Circassian slaves in the town at this moment for whom the Sultan has paid a thousand dollars apiece. You saw the Carrara marble lions the other day! Phaa! The infidels are making a mock of our half-infidel Sultan before battening upon the ruins of his realm."

From all this it will have been gathered that Morocco is, and has been for close upon two years, in a state of armed anarchy, and absolutely no authority holds good save that of the man with a gun. Even about Tangier, with its Legations, you may see the utter lawlessness of the land. What, so far, has been the effect upon the country of this state of anarchy? The writer will let one of the leading merchants and bankers in Tangier (European, of course) speak for him :—

"The country has never, within the memory of living men, been so rich and prosperous as at the present moment. In itself, as you know, it is very rich and fertile. If its people have been poor in the past, that was due solely to the nature of the administration of the country, and not at all to the country itself. Now, my friend, there is no administration, there is no government of any sort, and no taxes whatever are paid. Naturally, then, the men who a year or so ago lived always upon the extreme edge of starvation to-day have tea and sugar. We know, we merchants. They have these things, and they can pay for them. In Tangier here you may see at a glance the state of things. Land values have gone up enormously, building is in progress in every direction, house rents are positively higher than they are about Paris and London, business hums, money is plentiful, labour and food are high priced. A desirable state of things, you say? Truly, in a sense. But it is very like running a profitable business on the edge of an active volcano. Call it apathy, the habit of fear of European reprisals, or what you will, the fact that no considerable outbreak of Moors against foreigners has occurred this year is simply marvellous, and a remarkable tribute to Moorish common sense. You know how certainly and naturally it was expected. You know that British troops were kept in readiness to embark from Gibraltar at a moment's notice should word from Sir Arthur Nicolson here reach them. And I know how often pressure, foreign pressure, too, was brought to bear upon Sir Arthur to give that word—how close a thing it was. We may be grateful for the fact that, in Sir Arthur, the British have here the best and

most generally-respected Minister we have known in Tangier these many years. The Moors know well there is no law in the land; they pillage one another as the fancy takes them. How long, in such a land, does a state of absolute anarchy take to breed outbreak and massacre? Be sure we merchants and family men put the question to ourselves anxiously enough. Would I like to see the Rogui win, you say? The Rogui is nothing to me, and I believe the Sultan to be a good, kindly lad at heart. But what every business man in this country would like to see is a strong man at the head of affairs, call him Rogui, or Sultan, or what you will. And to be a strong ruler in Morocco a *Moor must be a Moor*, he must be a thorough Muslim. Progress—Why, yes, as much as you will, but if the fabric is to hang together it must be gradual and upon the basis of enforced law and order. It is just pitiful, the notion of advising an amiable young man like the Sultan to institute such and such reforms, to see him agree, and order the thing to be done, and then think it is done. This country is mediæval. You cannot introduce the finished products of three centuries of civilisation by giving an order. Take this matter of the reformed method of taxation, introduced on the advice of the British. The advice was good enough, but to be of any practical value it would have to be backed with money and troops. Instead of which, what has happened is that the British gave the advice, the Sultan accepted and acted upon it out of the goodness of his heart, the whole thing produced anarchy in the country, and, seeing that, the British have given the Sultan the cold shoulder and left him to the mercy of the people they helped him to infuriate. If he had set

to work gradually and carefully, a very strong Sultan, with full coffers and a good army, might have successfully introduced these reforms. This Sultan had none of these things. This Sultan—my friend, I will tell you; he has the best and kindliest intentions in the world, and, to back them, no strength of character or will whatever. Unassisted he cannot possibly hold his own, having lost his spiritual prestige for good and all. Assisted by France, he will become a nonentity and Morocco will become French; which means the end of trade, broadly speaking. Look at Madagascar, and remember the fair promises and pledges given to merchants. Why cannot France and Britain lay aside jealousy and join hands in keeping Abd el Aziz on the throne? That would benefit everyone. It is simply a question of money and counsel. And if you doubt that this country would repay it, just consider for one moment what this country can produce in its present state of complete insecurity and anarchy. But Britain has no right to play the part with France here that she has played with Russia over Turkey. French intervention here would mean the end of trade, and, as I see it, a tremendous loss to Britain commercially and politically. But intervention of some kind the country cries aloud for. It cannot go on as it is going. Common humanity and decency forbid that, or should forbid it, whatever political issues may be involved. And though Britain is great at the game of waiting, or indifference, or whatever it may be, and the French Government of the day is anti-military, yet you must not forget that constant dropping will wear away a stone, and the pressure that a large section of her own subjects are bringing to bear upon France in the

matter of North-African expansion is both constant and heavy."

Turning from this informant to *The Matin* of November 24, the writer finds M. Etienne, the chief of the Colonial party, dealing with the Morocco question in the Paris Chamber of Deputies:—

"M. Etienne separated himself definitely from M. Jaures, who would only hear of pacific arrangement with the tribes. He said:—'The Sultan has authorised us to direct and instruct the men of these tribes (M. Etienne's interpretations are quaint, and as frankly daring as his expressions of policy in the matter of French military ambitions in North Africa), they are the embryo of forces which he will have, thanks to our authority. With this policy enforced, you may be certain, on the one hand, of absolute peace in Southern Oran, and on the other that the delay will turn to our profit in Morocco. When, in fact, the Sultan sees that his strength comes only from our authority, he will turn to us, and when the Government, after having assured all Europe that we have no other end in view than a work of civilisation, has complete liberty of action, then we can finish off the work. But if you wish to act only by pacific arrangement, your efforts will be purely wasted; and the tribes, by way of thanks, will send you bullets.' (*Tres bien! Tres bien!*)."

M. Etienne, with his reckless candour and his frank, military ambitiousness, must be a good deal of a thorn in the side of the socialistic Bloc, one fancies. For there is no denying that the strength of the Bloc

lies in its tail, which is purely socialistic and anti-military. And thus we arrive at the present curious position of France in relation to Morocco. For half a century she has aimed at securing Morocco as a matter of vital and paramount importance. Now that at last the fitting moment has arrived, when Morocco itself is without a Government, Germany is inclined to, perhaps, rather sardonic politeness, as who should offer poison to a would-be suicide, Italy is ready to be placated with the assurance of freedom in Tripoli, and England, the great obstacle-maker, shows only friendly indifference, France finds herself unprepared to pluck the long-desired and cultivated fruit; finds, in fact, that that master of every democratic state, the majority, is not willing to authorise the necessary outlay for a forward move. But, as has been indicated, there are many kinds of pressure which can be, and are being, brought to bear upon the French Government by the French military party; and that which the socialistic Bloc would never authorise deliberately may well be forced upon it, and very shortly, by the sort of tactics which gave the Rogui his financial backing and helped to set Morocco ablaze in rebellion.

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Postcript

Readers of the *Fortnightly Review* of July 1901 may remember Hadj Mokdin and his letter, which was called "A Swan's Song from Morocco." The writer of these lines has just received another letter from Hadj Mokdin, some portion of which he thinks should reach the English

public here. Be it remembered that in July 1901, before the world had heard of a Moorish Pretender, Hadj Mokdin wrote:—

"What shall I say of the Frenchman, the French protected Israelite, the commercial agent at the Court?" (The Sultan's Court was then at Marrakish, the remote and essentially African rather than Moorish city in which Abd el Aziz first tasted the power of his own hand.) "This I will say, that he has achieved so much that here, in Marrakish, true Believers must withdraw to the privacy of their own apartments to curse him. He and his influence may not, without dire risk, be openly reviled. And the most of Moors are moved in their hearts to revile this man. Nay, through him we draw near the stage at which *our Lord himself must and will be reviled and held cheaply in his subjects' eyes.*"

How absolutely true Hadj Mokdin's words (of June 1901) were readers may judge. From his letter, dated December 28th 1903, the writer of this article extracts the following:—

"My friend, the condition of the Lofty Portal is at this present more parlous than has been that of any previous Sultan who ever sat under the green Parasol in Al Moghreb. I am newly arrived here in Tangier from the Court, as you know. My son has this day joined me, after one unrestful week spent about the Court. My hand wearies at the thought of trying to paint for you the situation, but this I will say, that in my opinion the winter rains are our Lord's best friends. I am assured that, failing aid from your lands, where

the infidel dwells, our Lord cannot possibly hope to take the field in spring-time to face again the angry hordes who will follow in the train of the rascal whom we call the Rogui. I call him rascal. Y'Allah t'if! I have read his letters. He is a man of no parts. But, my friend, he represents the feeling which stirs the breast of well-nigh every Mussulman in this our Al Moghreb. Therein lies his strength. And, with the coming of spring-time (unless the French should forsake him) he will come with forces somewhat organised as well as forces may be in this land. And he will speak loudly at the gates of Fez. And who, my friend, shall answer him? Not Moulai Abd el Aziz, by Allah; not Moulai Abd el Aziz, unless the face of things shall have changed mightily. For, to-day, there is no Moor in Al Moghreb who would fight for Moulai Abd el Aziz, save those who fight for money alone and are indifferent to the cause. And how many of those who fight for money only can our Sultan buy? My friend, tell it abroad in your London-Country, so that if any are there who care for our unhappy Sunset Land help may be given and Al Moghreb saved from the fate that befel Algeria. Our Lord has just no money left at all. His Kaid Maclean, they tell me, is now in London-Country, pulling every string within his reach, and pulling unavailably, to obtain money for our Lord. The news of his unsuccess is in the Court even now, and his *protégé*, Mennebhi, is deposed already. Meantime, my son has it from Hadj Abd er-Rahman, thou knowest, the Rogui is laying up stores of arms and ammunition, and French gold is plentiful with him. Think not that Moors will in the upshot rally round our present Lord. You of your faith can

hardly realise what it means to us. To the Moor it seemeth that you Nazarenes, and more than any you of London-Country, have bewitched, debauched our Sultan. His European friends face us at every step here in Tangier, the household of the chiefest among them scattering money to the winds, flaunting it before us, while our Lord repines alone, almost defenceless, lacking the pay for his natural guards there in Fez. And, my friend, I say it in all personal kindliness, you people of London-Country have done this thing; you, even more than the accursed tribe of Fransawi (the French), have made a mock of our Sultan to his own people. Can you then turn your backs upon him in his loneliness? Be sure the Fransawis will not when the time comes for them to give aid. Give aid! Thou knowest what their aid will be. And, my friend, thou knowest it will shut out aid and trade alike to any other Nazarene Power. Our Sultan is a young man with a large heart and a small head. May Allah pardon me that I should say so to a Roumi! He has done, or attempted to do, the things which your countrymen bade him do, and thereby he has lost the last shred of power over his own people. Can you leave him at that? If so, the end is certain—a French Morocco; and that I think within a few moons. But can it really be? Is that the fairness of your countrymen of which you have spoken to me?"

This much, in all the complicated tangle of the Moorish situation, is clear—the Sultan has come to the end of his resources. Though he were a far stronger man than he is he could not look to administrate his country without collecting his

revenues. The opinion of those most concerned and most capable of knowing is that the present Sultan never will be able to do this. For the collection of revenues and the maintenance of law and order in Morocco two things are necessary—armed force (which cannot exist without money) and spiritual prestige. Abd el Aziz has lost all that he ever had of either. One states the fact with the more regret because he has proved himself an amiable, kindly, merciful young man, who desires the happiness of his people and has a strong bent in the direction of modern innovations and progress. But it is a fact, none the less, and a fact that Europe (and especially France and England) has no right to turn its back upon. There are a good many reasons which go to make it certain that France will not ignore this regrettable fact. There are at least two good reasons which ought to prevent Britain ignoring it: one is that she is largely responsible for the Sultan's present unfortunate position; the other is that *Britain cannot afford to let France have a free hand in Morocco*, which is what France will have failing British intervention. It has been stated in France that in the event of a French protectorate being established in Morocco Britain might rest assured that the ports should remain neutral. But of what earthly use would be neutral ports, or any other sort of ports, with a closed door behind them, or, in the event of war, a hostile hinterland. Merchants do not want to supply goods to the beaches of Morocco, but to the country. And, in the event of sudden stress of circumstances, not to speak of the steady strain of peaceful commercial enterprise, how long might France be expected to respect the neutrality of the

Moorish ports if the hinterland were in her possession? History supplies a definite answer to this question.

Again, there has been mooted the suggestion of a dual control of Morocco, and it has been argued that as Britain invited the co-operation of France in Egypt, so we should ask France now to join in a dual protectorate and administration of Morocco. Such a policy as this, almost any policy, perhaps, were preferable to the simple attitude of *laisser faire*, but in the light of past happenings and present French ambitions the idea of a dual control seems rather hopeless. The French socialistic party would surely oppose it as an extravagance, whilst the military and colonial party would fight such a suggestion to the bitter end, as being more humilating than a complete withdrawal from Morocco.

There remains an alternative. Admitting the urgent necessity either of actual intervention or of such substantial assistance as no Power could be expected to give without sooner or later claiming the right to actual intervention, we may narrow the possibilities down to the consideration of two powers—France and Britain. Now, unless under the pressure of dire necessity, France will never withdraw her pretensions in Morocco. On the other hand, without running terrible risks,and facing certain heavy losses of more kinds than one, Britain cannot afford to give France an absolutely free hand in Morocco, seeing that its shores skirt the entrance to the Mediterannean. The neutral port suggestion is puerile and no guarantee at all. The dual control suggestion may fairly be dismissed, firstly as something to which France would not be likely to agree, and secondly

because the hopeless state of things in Egypt before the siege of Alexandria forms an overpowering argument against any attempt at a joint French-English control of an Oriental country. But, putting aside the quite futile neutral port scheme, there remains this consideration: There already exists in Morocco a natural boundary, which divides the Mediterannean and Atlantic seaboards from the interior and the Algerian frontier, and shuts off coastal Morocco from the much-debated lands of the Tuat, which France now claims the right to administrate, and from the caravan route to the South, which France wants to control and direct into Algeria. It that natural boundary could be accepted by the two Powers as dividing their spheres of influence, Morocco might well be saved by intervention upon both sides of the Atlas, our fairway to our Eastern possessions might be safe-guarded, and, at the same time, French aspirations in the direction of North African expansion and the proper protection of Algeria might be satisfied. In these circumstances the social and commercial development of an utterly neglected but very rich country would be assured, and a very present menace to the peace of Europe finally removed. Humanity and justice, as well as expediency, demand the formulation and application of some definite policy with regard to Morocco before the winter rains are over and the Pretender and the young Sultan come into conflict again. Surely, in the interests of our Empire, Britain should be well and speedily to the fore in this matter.

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But, when all is said, this is not at all the note by which I would have you remember my book of

jottings from Sunset Land. I do not pretend that it is more than a book of jottings, and, indeed, I feel that I owe some apology for its inconsequent character. I cannot give you Morocco, or I would. I cannot hope to make you feel the wonderful fascination of the land; but what I do hope I may have succeeded in doing is the presentation of suggestions. A passing hay-cart will suggest country meadows to you, on London Bridge. I would like to think that in this book, so full of faults and obvious shortcomings, I may have done so much for Morocco. It is still the land of romance. I, personally, am very grateful for that. It is the home, not of politics but of story; and so, before I buckle up my wallet, let me tell you the story of an Englishman I know and Achmet, Abd el Sadak.

ACHMET'S CHARM

MY faithful friend and one-time servant, who was so fittingly named Achmet, Abd el Sadak (The Slave of the True), passed away peacefully in the ancient port of Salli, three days prior to my sailing from Morocco last month—may Allah have fitted for him a most sumptuous pavilion in Paradise! That event, releasing me as it did from promises, is what unlocks my lips regarding a certain notable change in my position in the world and way of living.

I take no shame whatever in admitting that up till the year '95 my days were needy days, and my life that of a plain gentleman-adventurer, possessed of little or no capital in this world beyond such as may be said to lie in ten active fingers, five tolerably alert senses, and a heart not over and above susceptible to the grip of fear. It is perfectly true that in the year '94 I was posted a defaulter in the hall of the Wayfarers' Club, owing to my inability to meet the annual demand for subscription, But the fortune of war is variable, and I am not aware that its buffetings are any disgrace to an otherwise clean-lived man. At all events, having said so much I have said all that I know of that need be said with reference to the shady side of my life's record—and am unashamed.

It was in the year 1887 (in these dates I refer, of course, to the Christian calendar and not to that of the Faithful) that I first met my trusty friend

Achmet; and during the eight years of Eastern wanderings which followed he was my constant and most loyal attendant in rain and sunshine, in good fortune and in bad. I paid for a sheep (an attenuated beast it was, too, if I remember aright) for the feast of his thirty-seventh birthday on the morning of our first meeting; and he paid for my venturesomeness in his blood upon more than one subsequent occasion.

It was during the morning of All Fools' Day, in the year '97, that I carelessly put to Achmet the question out of his answer to which came the greatest adventure of my life and his. The sun having gained something near to his full strength we had just descended from the flaky old pink roof of my house beside Bab el Jeed (the Gate of the Hanging) in the port of Salli, to the central court or patio, in which, with my books, and my dogs, and my cheery little marble fountain, I purposed passing the heat of the day. I will here admit that I refer with some vanity to this small abode of mine, by token that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, I am the only infidel-born man who has been permitted to take up his residence within the walls of Salli, the old Moorish pirate stronghold, at all events during the past thirty or forty years. The house I purchased from Achmet's creditors shortly after that thirty-seventh birthday of his, when the roof that had sheltered himself and his buccaneering fathers before him seemed likely to be lost to him for ever. I need scarcely say that the good man never found the door of his old home shut to him after I obtained possession. It was there he died, in the best room, with a goodly circle of f'keehs and holy men about his head, last month.

But with regard to my question: It was an idle

one enough, as has been said, and one I had never troubled to put during eight long years of vagabondage here and there in my Moorish friend's company, though the subject of it had dangled before my eyes just so often as they had chanced to rest upon Achmet's wiry form.

"Good m'koddem," said I, as I rolled a cigarette (he always liked to be addressed and thought of as my steward or man of affairs, though Heaven knows my affairs stood in small need of a comptroller), "what might the little locket be that you wear so constantly about your neck? Does it by chance hold a scrap of some ancient Kiswat, or a charm against the Evil Eye, from which Allah preserve all Believers!" The Kiswat, you know, is the annually-renewed curtain that is hung about the Ka'abah at Mecca; a very holy fabric, strips from which are more soothing to the fortunate possessor, because more authentic, than the most of Christian relics.

"Nay, Sidi"—the good man always called me "Master" though he never drew wage from me—"'tis no charm at all, if as they say a true charm must needs come from a holy man or one greatly learned. Natheless I would not readily part with it, Sidi, for my father wore it before me, and laid it in my hand but a few minutes before he departed—may God have forgiven him!" (This formal ejaculation by no means implies any reflection upon the departed.) "And as for how he came by it, Sidi, that is quite a story, and an odd one to boot; yet it was from no great f'keeh or shareef either, but from a poor suffering âlj who was within an hour of his last gasp upon earth."

Good Achmet loosed the little amulet from his

neck and gave it me to handle at my leisure. I was a little surprised to find that it appeared to be of pure gold, and to be decorated upon one side with "two guns," as Moors say: that is, with the pillars of the arms of Spain, as one sees them upon a dollar. The obverse side was unrelieved, and the thing did not appear to open in any way. Being fresh from a journey and wallowing in idleness, I pressed Achmet for the story, and this, as I remember it, was what he told me.

"B'ism Illah! These things happened, Sidi, in the year 1246" (1828 A.D.), "when my father—may God have forgiven him!—was no more than a slip of a boy, who might look unveiled women in the face without shame. His father was Khaleefah of this our city of Salli, under Basha Abd el Kareem, a land-loving gentleman who never went aboard a korsán" (pirate vessel) "in his life, and in that was unlike to most other men of good family in Salli. Yet withal he had his dealings with the pirates, and, as I am told, built this very house with money so made. At all events he was no enemy, but rather a friend to the best of those who plied that gallant craft. But yet he was Khaleefah, and so must needs obey the mandates of his Basha, and through him the word of their Lord the Sultan, Moulai Abd er-Rahman — upon him the peace! Now you, Sidi, who are learned in books, will know that the Sultan Moulai Abd er-Rahman obtained the repute of being the first ruler who succeeded in putting an end to this same profession of piracy which had for so long been held in high esteem in Morocco. Yet, as En-Nasiri, the learned historian, has written in his book for all men to read" (see *Kitáb el Istiksà fi Akhbár Daûl el Maghrib.* Cairo,

1895. Sid En-Nasiri died in his native town of Salli but one month before this conversation took place), "it was by the order of our Lord Moulai Abd er-Rahman, and not for their own good pleasure, that brave pirates captured those Austrian vessels in the very year of which I speak, and thus led to the Austrian attempt, which Allah defeated, to bombard El Araish. But it must natheless be admitted that, for good purposes of his own, the Sultan chose to obtain the repute of one who sought to suppress piracy, and to this end it was needful that he should deal out pains and penalties publicly.

"Now the Sultan, being of the sacred blood, was not minded to inflict suffering upon good Muslims and sons of his own people. Yet an example had to be made, and so our Lord's wise choice fell upon one Absalaam, an English renegade whose infidel name I know not. This afflicted one had risen to some power and rank among the pirates, being without doubt a most cunning sailor, and withal a brave man. For years he had captained his own korsán, and men said that he had wrested greater wealth from the sea-going infidels than had all the others of his craft together. Be that as it may, the order reached my grandfather that Absalaam should first be forced to yield up whatever treasure he might possess, and then be publicly hanged at the city gate, word thereof being sent to sundry European Bashadors"—that is, ministers or ambassadors—"that they might witness the execution, or at least know of it, and so be satisfied that our Noble Lord was in very truth stamping out the trade.

"Now, accordingly, my grandfather put the question in various ways, as the custom is, with a

view to obeying his Lord and obtaining Absalaam's treasure before he should be hanged. But it seemed the renegade was a hard man, and not to be moved to speech by any ordinary application, such as the rod, the thumb-screw, or heated irons. So, having chosen the hook above the gate yonder, from which the wretch was ultimately to hang, my grandfather had Absalaam suspended there by his great toes and left awhile to meditate with a view to confession. As you know, the gate hath ever since been called the Gate of the Hanging. My father told me that he, being a gentle-natured lad, and noting that the sun shone very hotly upon the gate, felt sad for the renegade hanging there by his great toes. And so, when other folk slept, during the 'hour of fire,' he crept out of the patio here with a cup of good cool water under his djellab, and so to the gate to moisten hanging Absalaam's lips, over which blood and dust were sorely caked. Even the guards were sleeping, and no man stayed my father's hand from an act which was doubtless pleasing to Allah. Seeing his kindly intent, poor Absalaam gasped out, 'Put thy hand to my mouth, good lad, and God shall reward thee!' So my father put forth his hand, and out of the hanging wretch's swollen mouth there fell this same little lump of gold which thou hast seen upon my neck, where it hath hung since the day on which my father died—upon him the peace! 'Thrust it in thy purse, lad; give me of thy water and I will tell thee—' And that was as far as the poor fellow got with his thanks, for at that moment my grandfather, the Khaleefah, whose eyes were wondrous keen in affairs, appeared at the gate and saw the cup in my father's hand. 'Nay,' cried my father, aloud, fearing

punishment, 'I did but take a little charm from the poor man, that he gave me from his mouth.' My grandfather stared at this. 'What hast thou in thy mouth, man?' says he to Absalaam. ''Tis but a single jewel that I thought to hide, Lord,' gasped Absalaam. 'Thrust thy finger in my mouth, Lord, and take it; 'tis thine. I cannot loose it.' So grandfather thrust his finger into the wretch's mouth, and Absalaam bit it through, ay, and well into the bone, and choked and gasped and tried to laugh, when my poor grandfather leaped back with a cry. By the Prophet, he must have been a man of iron, that renegade! My grandfather had his eyes put out and his hands and feet slit open that afternoon, by way of rebuke; and the renegade, biding silent still, was hanged outright at sunset, and left over the gate to bleach and for Nazarenes to see.

"'Fling his accursed charm into the sea, my son,' said the Khaleefah to my father. And 'Ihyeh,' quoth my father, as in duty bound, but flung a pebble instead, and so kept this poor little charm, if charm it be, till the day of his death, when piracy as a profession had almost passed out of the minds of men."

And so I had the history of the little amulet, and good Achmet left me, idly tossing it in my hand, to sally out into the Sôk and do our modest day's marketing. I sat there alone, drowsily thinking of Salli rover lore, and of the gentle Lord Abd er-Rahman, who pulled out the tongue of his wazeer, Si Mohammed bin Drees, for having communicated with the Algerian rebel, Abd el Kader. I thought of the renegade Absalaam, mine own countryman, who had ended his life in so parlous a state over the gate which

stood no more than a few yards from where I sat. Colonel Keatings, in his account of a British embassy in 1785 (*Travels in Europe and Africa.* London, 1816), said that an English renegade built the great aqueduct that brought water to my door there in Salli, from Ismir, ten miles distant. The gallant Colonel was misinformed, I thought, but there was every reason to believe that the task of repairing it was entrusted to an English renegade. I wondered idly if the unfortunate Absalaam had any hand in that. Again I examined the gold amulet, and wondered that a thing made in the shape of a locket should have no opening in it. And then I fell asleep. The April sun is hot in Salli town.

Half an hour later I awoke, and my eyes fell upon my sloghi bitch, Jinny, where she lay stretched beside the fountain, nosing at some small object between her front paws. "What have you got there, Jinny?" said I, lazily. At the sound of my voice the bitch rose, stretched her sinewy frame to its full length, and walked slowly to my side. Then I saw that the toy of her idleness was Achmet's gold amulet, which lay there now, on the flags, an open locket, and showing what appeared to be a folded parchment inside it.

"Like my carelessness!" I muttered, as I leaned forward to recover the amulet. "But I wonder how in the world the bitch found a way of opening the thing!" Examination showed me that the locket was most delicately contrived, its spring and hinge being both hidden by a sort of rolled border or beading, which also hid effectually the line of division between the two halves. Achmet had told me that it did not open, or at least that he had never tried to open it, having always thought of it as being solid. So here,

I thought, as I carefully unrolled the little slip of parchment, is a document of at least seventy years ago, that was carefully preserved in the mouth of a dying renegade. I chuckled over my find. "This is history," I told myself. "State secrets, no doubt; pirate lore—treasure-trove."

And with that I stopped chuckling, and a sudden hot eagerness came over me to know what the parchment might contain. I can hardly tell you what I thought, but I became serious and eager. I remember a jumble of passing ideas about cryptograms, cyphers, and acrostics tripping one over the other in my mind; and then I had the little parchment spread fairly upon my knee. One side of it was raggedly torn, as it might be that the whole had proved too bulky for its hiding-place. The rest bore this message, written fairly enough, in the old style of sloping caligraphy, with long "S's," and some quaintness of spelling, and some incorrectness, but nothing in the least degree cryptic. It might have been the casual memorandum of a man of business.

"No. 2. Ismir—aqueduct. Three lanyards south, two and half east—under furthest edge sacred shadow —five spans.—ABSALAAM."

And that was absolutely all.

I was still poring over the simple words written so fairly, and in my own tongue, when Achmet returned from the Sôk, and stood a moment dumbfoundered at the sight of his little charm lying split in sunder as it appeared on the stool beside me. I explained the discovery which Jinny had made, and showed Achmet the ragged little bit of parchment. At first sight of

the parchment I noted a sudden glitter in the eyes of my friend. When he asked me to translate its message to him there came for one instant an expression in those eyes which I had never seen before. He confessed it later, with an approach to tears. For one fleeting moment his heart harboured suspicion and resentment where his infidel friend was concerned; the attributes which a notable Nazarene, Cardinal Newman to wit, has told us do not pertain to the man who deserves the name of gentleman. But his peculiar knowledge of the circumstances made him see farther into the matter than I could upon short notice; and, in any case, his suspicion was not more than momentary.

"And what think you that it may mean, friend?" I asked, when, for privacy, we had retired to an upper room and spread the little parchment upon a stool between us.

Achmet turned his two hands palms uppermost. "Sidi," said he, "there is no room here for a man to hazard guesses or cherish doubts. I ask thee, Sidi, for what was the renegade seized in the first place?"

"Why, because he was a successful pirate and piracy was to be put down—if I have understood your story rightly."

"It is most right, Sidi. And for why was my grandfather—may God have pardoned him!—obliged to hang this same renegade at first by his great toes, instead of by his neck, as the custom is in such matters?"

"Ah! His hidden treasure?"

"Ihyeh! And being stripped of all that men could see belonging to him, even to his littlest gar-

ment, and hung by his toes before the city gate, what one thing did this renegade cherish—ay, almost to the hour of his end, yielding it up only when certain and speedy death faced him, and then to a lad whom he wished to thank—one whom he saw coming to alleviate some small portion of his pains?"

"True, true," I admitted in some excitement at finding my own eager thoughts exactly borne out by one to whom the circumstances were all known. "And to think that for seventy years, or close on, it has lain on thy neck, and thy father's before thee, and never a thought given to its value, nor even to whether it opened or no!"

"Ihyeh, Sidi, we are but slaves of the All-knowing; slaves and little children in His hand. Dost remember when thy good grey mule fell lame on that ill-starred journey to Taradunt, Sidi?" I nodded. "Ihyeh, well, I did not tell thee, for we had troubles enough and to spare, but the night before I had lost this same little treasure-chamber which thou hast opened—lost it most fatally. Indeed, and it was then when I noted the good mule growing lamer at every step, that I first began to think seriously of the virtue which may have lain in my lost charm."

"H'm! Little thinking what really lay in it," I muttered.

"Little thinking, as thou sayest, Sidi. Yet had some good Djinn a care of my fingers I think, for at first blink of light next day I did come upon my little amulet, and where, think ye, but in the bottom of the basket in which I had given thy good grey mule her barley. The poor beast having sickened, as we had cause to know, thou and I, the half of her feed was left, and as I ran my fingers through it, seeking to

tempt her—'Aha! A stone,' says I. And lo, there was my little amulet among the barley."

"So a mule came near to eating it that day, O Achmet, and to-day the bitch there came nearer still to destroying the treasure in it."

"Ihyeh, the master-works of Allah!" ejaculated my friend with pious fervour. And then we fell to discussing the document before us. Round and about it we cast our suggestions and hints, some foolish and some shrewd, all sanguine, and a few that were directly to the point. At length, mere discussion proving unsatisfactory to me, I rose and moved to the doorway, Achmet following.

"See, my friend," said I, "this house hath become too small for me. How say you?"

"Sidi, its smallness hath cramped me sorely these several minutes now. But—"

"Ay, my tent, good Achmet; the mules, a little food, the guns, and some few tools such as farmers use; my tent pitched, let us say near the end of the great aqueduct at Ismir, before the sun goeth down this night—will not that give us more of room and peace?"

"Sidi, thy mind moves swiftly. Ismir? Ihyeh! All shall be as thou sayest. Look for me, Sidi, with all things prepared—in one hour."

It was as though an Englishman were to say "In a couple of minutes," and if achieved in Morocco would be little short of a miracle. But, seeing the light in Achmet's eyes, I had faith (which the event justified) and waited. Within an hour we were perched atop of bulging shwarries borne by two quick-stepping pack-mules which I had bought in Fez and valued highly, and before sunset we were eating our

evening meal at the mouth of my tent, our mules tethered beside us, and the end of the great aqueduct, which Moors say the Romans built, no more than a few hundred paces distant from us. We both knew by heart now the words upon our parchment, and so, whilst discussing it, had no need to refer to the document itself.

"No. 2. Ismir—aqueduct. Three lanyards south, two and half east—under furthest edge sacred shadow —five spans.—ABSALAAM."

"No. 2" referred to the object of our search, the treasure, or whatever it might be; so much seemed clear to me, and at that time I had no thought to spare for what No. 1 might be. The more I thought upon the few simple words of the parchment, the more convinced I became that it contained no intentional mystification, but was simply a memorandum made for the convenience of the writer, and as a safeguard against any trick of memory. "Ismir—aqueduct" I took to point plainly to the end of the aqueduct, its starting-point here at Ismir. From that end, I thought, one must proceed "three lanyards south" and "two and half east," and there find a spot marked by a "sacred shadow." The reference to a shadow was so far puzzling, but I thought there would be time enough to deal with that when we had discovered the spot referred to. My immediate concern was to know what "lanyards" might mean. And here, of course, my friend Achmet could be of no service to me. For all his knowledge of the circumstances he was quite helpless where our document was concerned, knowing no word of the tongue in which it was written.

The only kind of "lanyard" within my ken was

the sort of necklace of white cord which sailors wear about their necks bearing a knife or whistle. I have since learned that there are scores of different sorts of lanyards, but all I knew then was that as an infant I had gone clad as a man-o'-war's man in little, and had grandiloquently called the cord about my then innocent neck a lanyard. Then the length of a lanyard, I assumed, was from one to two feet. "Three lanyards south, two and a half east"—say five feet one way and four another. Heavens! We were probably standing on the very spot!

Within a very few moments Achmet and myself were at work with mattock and bar, as busy as terriers in a warren. The ground was fairly soft there, and we soon had a trench of twice five spans in depth, and never so much as a piece of scrap iron for our pains. Nothing, absolutely, but sandy earth; and when dark fell we climbed out of our pit in despair, and made tea to aid reflection withal. I was convinced by this time that we had failed to grasp the true meaning of our parchment. The "lanyards," that was the point that baffled me.

An hour passed while we discussed this obscure point of the "lanyards," and that found us no nearer, by all appearances, to any solution of the difficulty. It was disturbing, exasperating, to feel that the treasure, or whatever it was that this simple message referred to, might be lying within a few yards of where we sat, and yet so hopelessly out of our reach. I said as much.

"Ihyeh," sighed Achmet, "this is sure enough the place, and here sit we, idle, within a half a tasábeeh, it may be, of great wealth."

Had he threatened my life the good Moor had

certainly startled me less than he did in uttering these few words. I sprang to my feet, breathless.

"A half a tasábeeh, sayest thou?" I hissed at him. "Nay, but three south and two and a half east. Come! Mark thou the tasábeeh!"

Illumination came to Achmet in a flash, as it should have come to me, an Englishman, in the beginning. A tasábeeh is a Moorish rosary. Nothing is more common than the measuring of distances by the time occupied in pacing them, reckoned by the fingering of a rosary. It is a matter of every-day colloquial speech. And what more natural than that the renegade, a sailor probably, should call a rosary a lanyard when writing of it in English? It should have been plain for a child to read, I thought.

Placing our backs against the first buttress of the aqueduct, we referred to my pocket compass and headed due south. Slowly and evenly, then, we paced along in the light of a rising moon, Achmet muttering below breath as he fingered each bead of his biscuit-coloured rosary. This was his part. I would not trust myself to reckon, lest the fact that I was unfamiliar with the use of the pious instrument should lead to a miscalculation.

"Halt!" cried my friend at length. We had covered "three lanyards" to the southward. And now we turned slowly, my eyes glued to the compass, until we headed due east. Then forward again, Achmet muttering and fingering devoutly.

"Halt!" he cried again; and I found we had reached a little hill, upon which a few stunted olives stood among a wilderness of palmetto and aloe scrub. My eyes had never left the compass, and the ground

being open, I was convinced we must have come tolerably straightly in our course. I cut off the spear head of an aloe and stuck it in the earth at my feet. Then we proceeded to examine our surroundings.

"Now, friend," said I, "we seek a shadow—a 'sacred shadow.' What is there within sight that could be sacred?"

"Nay," said Achmet, "here are no mosques nor shrines, nor— But stay! Unless my memory plays me very false—I have not been here since I was a lad—there is an old tomb in the hollow there, between this little hill and the next. 'Tis not to say a shrine, exactly, but yet it is a tomb, and Si Abd el Haneen, who lies there—may God have pardoned him!—was doubtless a holy man enough. Ihyeh, methinks the tomb might be called sacred—like enough."

By this time we were striding down the little hill's side; and I promise you we paid little heed to the razor edges of palmetto leaves, though, being in Moorish dress, I was bare-legged, like Achmet, and wore only heel-less slippers on my naked feet.

Three minutes brought us to the crumbling wall of an old tomb, half hidden in prickly-pear and palmetto. But upon one side of the tomb the ground was bare of scrub, and there the grass showed plainly just how far the shadow of the tomb's dome was wont to fall by day. In a country where shade is as scarce as it is in El Moghreb, earth and vegetation show very clearly their appreciation of a shadow where it does occur.

"Here, then," said I, stooping over the line of fresh grass, "is the 'furthest edge sacred shadow.' Now, regarding the 'five spans'— But, Lord! What are five spans? It must mean five spans deep, or five

spans distant from this edge of the shadow. And in either case it is but a matter of a little digging. Ah! what fools we were to have left our mattocks behind!"

One hour later found us cautiously stepping out from our tent into the moonlight, carrying our guns openly, as Moors are wont to carry them, and hunching under our djellabs two mattocks and the crowbar that we kept for tent-pitching. Spades you shall not find in the Land of the Setting Sun, a circumstance I had cause to regret before the night was out, for in my opinion the mattock is a poor, futile sort of a tool, in my hands at all events. But I promise you the arms which directed those mattocks were active and vigorous enough. Never did serf or hired labourer delve as we delved beside old Abd el Haneen's tomb in the light of the moon that night. The great Moulai Ismail of pious memory was wont occasionally to roast a few of his workpeople in lime-kilns, throw them to his lions, or crush them under a falling wall if he fancied they did not put sufficient zest into their labours. But I greatly doubt if the most fearful among them could have equalled our industry.

At a depth of seven spans we had found nothing. So we began to dig outward, and away from the tomb. Half an hour passed, and the sweat I shook from my head, as a spaniel shakes water, splashed upon the broken earth at my feet. At my very next stroke the mattock rang on metal and jarred my wrist horribly. Little I cared. I dropped the tool and fell on my knees, scratching with both hands to feel for what I had struck. So far as I could force my fingers down they felt a smooth surface of metal, as of a coffer or case of some sort.

THE AUTHOR IN MOORISH GUISE

"El hamdu Illah!" I exclaimed with fervent piety, or emotion of some sort. And then the words turned to ashes in my mouth, my stomach retched within me, and the blood ceased to travel through my veins as a thin, strange voice above me cried, "Ihyeh, God be merciful—sacrilege! Eh, eh!"

It seemed to me that I got out of that hole as quickly as mortal man might; but Achmet, who had not been kneeling, but only stooping, surpassed me. His agility was really suggestive of magic. You have my solemn word for it that, swiftly as I reached the surface, I found that a tragedy had been enacted, was ended and done with, and all in the moment which I seemed to occupy in scrambling from out that fateful hole. Achmet had felled a man to earth with his mattock, and then, literally, pinned him to the earth with an eighteen-inch dagger, but very slightly curved. The fallen man was dead as Noah, and I perceived, with an odd sort of sentimental regret, that his hair was white and his face a gentle one.

"God forgive us, Achmet!" I murmured, without much relevance. "He seems a kindly-looking sort of grandfather, too!"

"Yeh; he's well enough," admitted Achmet, wiping his knife on the grass. "But there was no place here for him. 'Tis poor fortune his visit to this shrine has brought him—may God give him peace!"

I thought Achmet's attitude both modest and dignified; and I think still that he was as agreeable a gentleman to be killed by as you would find in a day's march. But we are not all just prepared to die, even at the hands of such an one as Achmet; and so I told myself there should be no more killing in this

affair of ours if I could help it. I would liefer share our secret with another, I thought, than have the whole matter darkened by the stains of blood. But I recognised the reasonableness of Achmet's reminder that our work awaited us; so, turning from the old gentleman and his dead, kindly face, we scrambled back into our hole.

In less than ten minutes we had entirely uncovered an iron chest with a heavy hasp and bolt in the middle of its lid. It struck me that in Gibraltar I had seen heavy old shot lying in just such another coffer as this one. Many broken thoughts struck me, and I swore nervously when Achmet's forehead struck mine as we both stooped to raise the lid. It was a well-made box, and in the seventy, or eighty, or ninety years of its rest there under the earth, no sort of harm had come to it. The lid creaked and groaned a little in the lifting, but yet answered its purpose well enough, and then we saw the treasure of Absalaam the renegade which Sultan Abd er-Rahman had failed to see; the key to which renegade Absalaam had held in his poor, swollen, bloody mouth what time he hung by the toes roasting in the noonday sun outside the gate of Salli town.

There was a division down the centre of the chest, and upon one side we saw nothing but gold; upon the other, nothing but jewels. A sight it was for a money-loving man to dream of; and I will admit that for a moment or two it made me drunk, so that I laved my arms to the elbow in guineas upon which the moonlight showed me glimpses of the head of George III. and again of a Spanish Queen, and again of an eagle, and of other devices, most of which were unfamiliar to me.

But we had no time to spare for dreaming. My drunkenness passed in a moment; and even at that showed me a poorer creature in dignity than my friend Achmet. Not all the jewels of India could have unbalanced the Moor.

"We can never carry this," said he, as he might have spoken of a sack of barley. This was the very bracing sort of tonic that I needed. "Why, no," said I. "Go you back to the tents, good Achmet—wings at your heels—and bring hither the mules with shwarries."

He looked at me. "Ihyeh; and I take care of the old gentleman above. Go!" At that he turned and sped off into the night. The moon was already low, and everything about the old tomb was very dim, and ghostly, and shadowy now. But Achmet's nerve and common sense had braced me finely. I dragged the body of the poor old man into the hole that we had first dug, and I gave him the benefit of the only Mohammedan prayer I could recall at the moment before I proceeded to shovel the earth over him. For some time I tugged at the iron coffer, thinking to have all things prepared for Achmet's return; but though I shifted its position somewhat I could not raise it, and so presently gave up the attempt and sat down upon its lid to await the coming of my partner. It was not easy to be calm, and I longed for work for my two hands; their itching fingers gave me no rest, and my mind refused to think connectedly of anything beyond the immediate hour.

At length Achmet arrived with the mules after making a considerable *détour* to avoid the road and the possible attention of some late wayfarer. One mule we loaded with gold, in coins and in beaten, shapeless

lumps, the whole of which we tied securely in my great tent-bag, that thoughtful Achmet had flung into one of the shwarries before returning to me. Then, together, we tackled the chest itself, and without much difficulty dragged it out from the hole. The hole we filled as well as we could, stamping down the earth and covering all with great armfuls of palmetto leaves and scrub. Then we swung the coffer upon the birda of the unladen mule, covered it with both our djellabs, and started off for the tent, each with a hand resting on one side of the iron chest. And behind us, doubtless resenting this midnight occupation, plodded the other mule, picking its own way through the night, undriven, led by no man, a hammer-headed pack-mule bearing in its eighteen-penny palmetto panniers a king's ransom in minted and beaten gold.

A month later we both sailed for Hamburg. I, as a curio-monger, was taking with me quite a little collection of Moorish rugs and carpets, things which do not greatly interest the Customs officials. Yet between them — please allow the words literal significance—those Rabat rugs represented a fortune of not less than three hundred thousand pounds. "No. 2" satisfied me, and I have never been much exercised in my mind as to what or where No. 1 might be.

THE END

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